CHICAGO LEDGER

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In This Issue!

Jungle Treasure

A tense story staged on the Dark Continent.

CHICAGO LEDGER

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Says the Editor—

DO YOU REMEMBER THE DAYS BACK IN THE DIM DARK PAST WHEN—

All cartoons in the newspapers showed the workingman wearing a small round cap and carrying a tin dinner pail with an inverted coffee cup on the lid?

People bought stock in Mexican mines and Mexican propositions and were muchly envied by their neighbors?

Movie shows consisted only of scenes showing a group of people chasing some one, and tumbling over fences and ditches?

The Haynes Distillery Company of Troy, Ohio, advertised four full quarts of whisky for $3.20, express postpaid?

Farmers reaching Chicago were induced by "slickers" to go out to the Lake Front to see the explosion, where they were inveigled into a penny-matching game and lost their rolls?

Twenty men, at 5 cents apiece, would line up at carnivals about a strange machine with tubes for the ears, called a phonograph, and hear "The Ravings of McCullough?"

Oom Paul was a celebrity?

Modern city street cars ran by a system in which a clutching lever grabbed thru a slot onto a lumbering cable?

"The World's Fair Contest Company" ran a great "Estimate Contest" with $35,000 in prizes, and estimates on the attendance at the Fair selling for 25 cents apiece, less in large quantities?

The Haymarket riot in Chicago was the only excitement along I. W. W. and Bolshevist lines?

Everybody wondered whether the North Pole ever would be discovered?

When the women's magazines printed menus showing how father, mother, Hannah, Bill and little Josie could live on 21 cents a day for the whole group?

The Yellow Kid was the comic figure of the day?

"Love's Guilty Dream;" or, "The Idol of the Regiment," by Ardienne Roucolle, ran in the Ledger?

When the Czar was considered the world's most awesome and mysterious figure?

IF SO, PERHAPS YOU WILL STILL BE ON THIS IMMORTAL TOADSTOOL WHEN—

Labor will never be shown in a newspaper cartoon unless he has a small straw figure of capital tied to his left heel?

People will buy stock in mines and propositions in the State of Mexico, U. S. A., and will be again muchly envied by their neighbors?

Movie shows will have perspective, sound waves and color photography.

Whisky will sell for $100 a quart, and will be advertised by word of mouth only.

City men visiting in the country will be induced to go out to the north pasture to see the five-legged calf, where they will be inveigled into a poker game, and will wind up by losing their shoes and signing a contract to work one year in the fields as hired hands, and thus help to grow the food that they help to eat.

One hundred men, at 5 cents apiece, will take seats in an auditorium and hear the Grand Opera in New York City or in Paris by wireless telephone.

Mr. Robert Cleveland, who occupies the office to our right, will be a celebrity.

The cable system for street cars may return, only this time the car will be gyroscopic, will have one wheel and will run on express schedules at 100 miles per hour.

Some wise man will run a lottery giving beans, potatoes and carrots for prizes, and underpaid Government officials will all load up on tickets sub-rosa.

We may have a riot to which the Haymarket affair will be merely a fist fight between loafers.

Mars will be talked to daily by Earth by means of enormous light signals, placed on the Sahara desert.

The magazines will print information proving how any one can be buried at an expense of not less than $1,000.

Jeff will get married and have a child, and Mutt's son Cicero will supplant Mutt in the top strip of the comic page.

"The Devil's Own," a rattling good serial by Randall Parrish, will run in the Ledger.

We shall find the Czar living in a four-room, stove-heated flat at Sedgwick and Oak streets, and toting home a market basket every night on the Ravenswood local.

A Frequent Crime.

"EXCUSE me," said a detective, as he presented himself at the door of a music academy, "but I hope you'll give me what information you have and not make any fuss."

"What do you mean?" was the indignant inquiry.

"Why, that little affair, you know."

"I don't understand."

"You see, we got a tip from the house next door that somebody was murdering Wagner, and the chief sent me down here to work on the case."

Sure!

TEACHER—Notches may be defined as small hollow cuts. Now, Eddie, can you give me a synonym for notches?

Eddie, the Tough—Nix, teacher; nix!

Teacher—Correct.

A Perfect Chesterfield.

"I HAD a little experience this morning with an extremely polite man."

"Tell me about it."

"I was standing near him in a barber shop while a dark attendant was briskly applying the whisk broom. The gentleman turned to me and said, 'Excuse my dust.'"

Machinery.

"CHARLEY, dear," said young Mrs. Torkins, "I want you to keep out of politics."

"What's the reason? I might stand as good a chance as the next man."

"I don't think so. Anybody who is so unhandy with a little thing like a lawn mower would stand no chance whatever in operating a steam roller."

Hot Off the Jokesmith's Anvil

Just Like Him.

"How was the banquet?"

"Fine. Father gave the toast to the ladies."

"He did, eh? That's just like him, letting on to a lot of other women that he's so kind and considerate when he wouldn't make toast for me in the mornings if my head was splitting open."

Difference of Opinion.

A man in a Western town was hurt in a railroad accident, and after being confined to his home for several weeks he appeared on the street walking with the aid of crutches.

"Hello, old fellow," greeted an acquaintance, rushing up to shake his hand. "I am certainly glad to see you around again."

"Thanks," responded the injured one, "I am glad to be around again."

"I see you are hanging fast to your crutches," observed the acquaintance. "Can't you do without them?"

"My doctor says I can," answered the injured party, "but my lawyer says I can't."

No, I Can't.

"I can read my wife like a book," bragged Mr. Nabor.

"I'll bet you can't shut her up like one," growled Mr. Gab.

The Conventional Thing.

Romantic Youth—Why do you hesitate, darling? We could easily run away and get married.

His Fancy—My dear boy, you're too impossible! Why, the only photographs I could leave behind me were taken before I had my hair bobbed!

Eldorado.

"Leonidas!" exclaimed Mrs. Keekton, "are you aware that I was reading my essay on politics aloud to you?"

"Yes, my dear."

"But you went to sleep."

"Why not? You removed every problem so completely that I saw no further reason for retaining personal consciousness."

His Hardship.

"Fate has been very hard on that man."

"How so?"

"He has had such an itching for fame and has always been obliged to scratch for a living."

Educated.

The Author—I have a little work here entitled "400 Prescriptions for the Prevention and Cure of Carbuncles."

The Victim—What do you know about carbuncles?

The Author—When I had mine I had ninety-eight prescriptions from friends and three hundred and two from strangers.

Experienced Printer.

"Our new company is capitalized at $50,000,000."

"Great! Let me see your prospectus."

"Oh, we haven't got out a prospectus yet. The confounded printer wants his pay in advance."

THE KID SPEAKS.

Now, one of my sister's best beaux
Is extremely fond of loud heaux,
So, oft when he'll call
And they sit in the hall,
He will peaux, so heaux he'll expeaux.

TWO BEAUTIFUL DOLLS FREE.

The Doll Department, 20 E. Lake St., Chicago, Ill., are making an offer to send two beautiful dolls free to any boy or girl who will show and distribute their beautifully colored pictures. If you want the dolls write today.—Adv.

Brain Teasers.

Beheadings, Curtailings.

356—1. Behead agreeable and have a cold substance.
2. Behead a standard of perfection and have to distribute.
3. Behead tidy and have to devour.
4. Behead a color and have an article.
5. Curtail to be gentle and have a piece of Scotch clothing.
6. Behead not any and have a single amount.
7. Behead a weight and have a preposition.
8. Behead a rod and have a conjunction.
9. Curtail in this place and have a feminine pronoun.
10. Behead a period of time and have an organ of sense.

Jumbled Names.

357—Find in the following the names of some of the United States:
1. Ntesneese. 2. Eamin. 3. Abalaam. 4. Ytuenkck. 5. Myadnral. 6. Slilioin. 7. Wderalea. 8. Rfdoali. 9. Haolkmao. 10. Fcliairnao. 11. Lpnynvaneasi. 12. Bnkasrae. 13. Akasrnsa. 14. Ualinaiso.

A Dozen "Ail"-ments.

358—1. To be unsuccessful.
2. To necessitate.
3. To overcome.
4. A bird.
5. To be of use.
6. To hunt.
7. Fragile.
8. A farmer's aid.
9. A symbol of slowness
10. An item.
11. To reduce.
12. A greeting.

Three-letter Fish Squares.

359—
1
A fish.
A beverage.
To implore.

2
A fish.
A short song.
A lair.

3
A fish.
A period of time.
An edict.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES.

352—Cross-word Enigma.

T E A
E A T
B O A T E Y E
O A R Y E A
A R E R E A R
R O E
E E L

353.—Hour-glass Puzzle.

D E C K S
A L E
O
A C E
L I K E N

354—A Bird Ladder.

ALBATROSS—CHAFFINCH.
A C
L—arc—H
B—ahi—A
A—loo—F
T—hie—F
R—adi—I
O—nio—N
S—toi—C
S H

355—Four-word Square.

S H E D
H E R E
E R I E
D E E R

It is not desired that readers send in the answers to the puzzles. They are printed simply as brain teasers, and the correct answers will be printed the following week.

Sure to Make Talk.

Bacon—They say when a man's ears are red somebody is talking about him.

Egbert—Yes, and he can just bet that somebody is talking about him if his nose is red.

Another Way.

"The old question, 'Where did he get it?' is being asked now with more energy than ever."

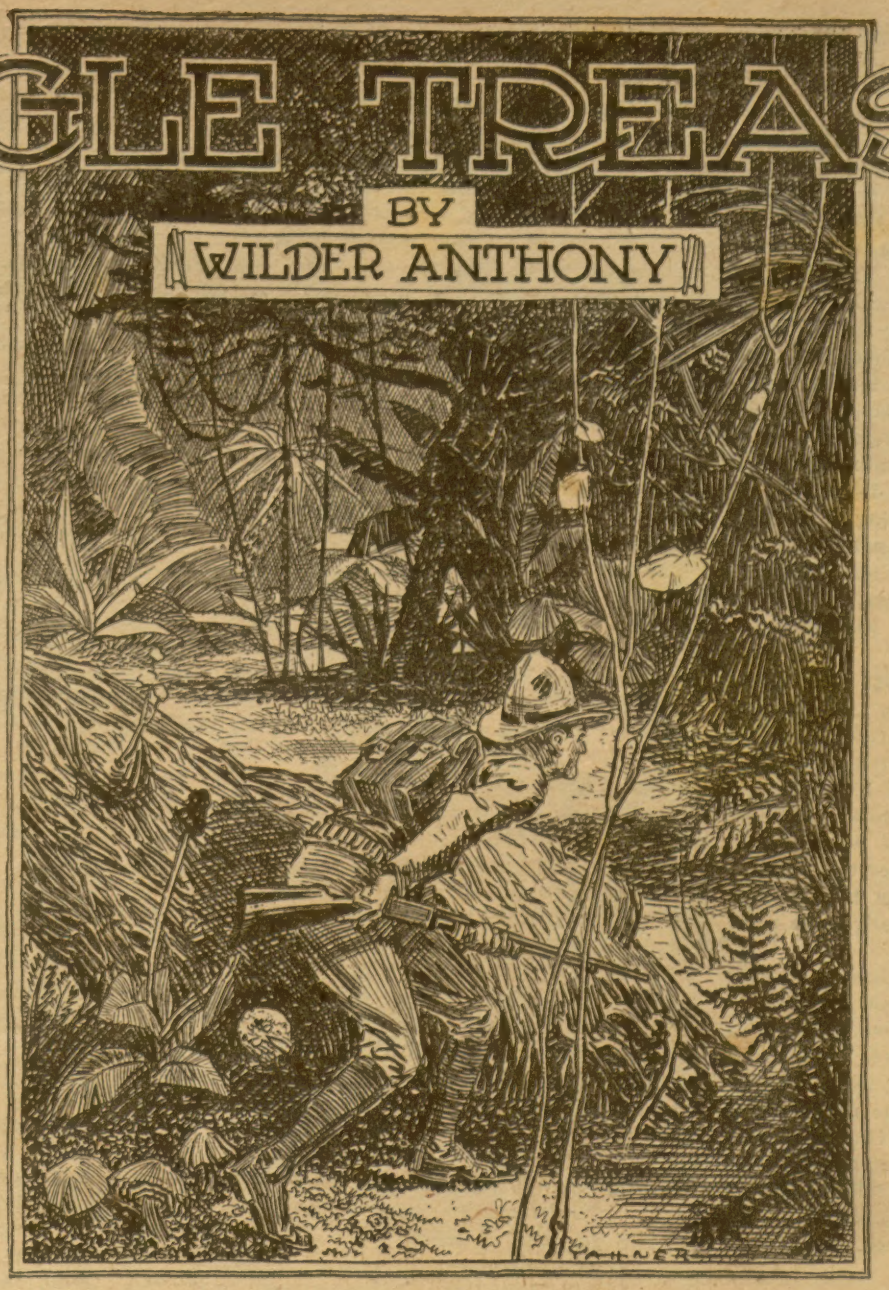
"Yes, it does seem to have considerable more spirit in it."

Listen.

Cohenstein (to his employer)—I cannot live on my salary, Mr. Goldenbaum! The thought that I can save only $10 a week from it is driving me into an early grace.

JUNGLE TREASURE

BY WILDER ANTHONY



He Crouched Behind the Huge Gnarled Root, and Swept the Walls of the Jungle With a Quick Glance.

IT WAS early morning when Varden left the bank of the river which he had been following for a week and turned off into the heart of the jungle. A day's journey or so farther on he knew that he would reach another stream, where he hoped to find friendly Dyaks from whom he could hire a canoe and paddlers to take him to the coast. Until then, as he had been ever since his almost miraculous escape from the bushmen who had surprised and wiped out his little outfit, he would be entirely alone in the very middle of a region thru which, so far as he knew, no white man had ever passed before him.

In the silent corners of the world a man soon sheds that inherent reserve which holds him self-contained and speechless amid crowds. A year in the wilderness of interior Borneo had taught Hugh Varden the value of his own company. Just now, in spite of the fact that the destruction of his men was still fresh in his mind, to say nothing of his own imminent danger of attack from wandering bushmen, he was feeling strangely buoyant in spirit. He hummed a joyous little tune beneath his breath, growled softly at especially rough spots in the trail, and chuckled his delight in those rare intervals when a thinning of the dense growth made easier progress. Had it not been for his fear of attracting lurking enemies he would have sung and whistled aloud. For Varden was very happy. Safely packed in a thick cushion of damp moss within the knapsack on his shoulders were two perfect specimens of the wonderful orchid which had been the cause of his voluntary exile. His task was completed and now he was going home. HOME! Within three months at most he expected to be wearing clean linen, eating well-cooked food, and rubbing shoulders with other white men.

To those who have never experienced a long sojourn in some unmapped portion of the world this may mean very little; but to Varden it meant everything. It was life! The mere thought of those teeming cities which he had not seen for so many months made him want to shout with joy. He felt like a sailor just starting on a long furlough, and he grinned boyishly as his dreams reached out into the future. For twelve months he had been practically buried alive; buried among smelly rivers and rotting vegetation with no companions but wild beasts and black or copper-colored men who were nearly as wild. Now, at last, he was returning to civilization—getting away from the everlasting monotony of the jungle and its smells.

He was hemmed in on all sides by tall virgin forest. Altho the sun hung almost straight overhead, a dim twilight prevailed, for no shaft of sunlight could pierce the thick canopy of leaves and creepers which roofed the jungle. Living walls of green rose up lush and dank on both sides of the narrow runway in which he walked. Walls of silent forest, where even the atmosphere seemed to be charged with the unhealthy smell of death. An eerie spot, but peaceful in its way; as silent as a tomb.

Varden was not deceived by this apparent peacefulness, however. Tho he could not see it, he knew that the jungle all around him teemed with fecund life. Game there was in plenty for those who knew how to find it; and the ferocious bushmen who were always turning up at unexpected moments armed with their deadly "sumpitans," or blow-guns, moving as silently as shadows thru the trees among which they passed their lives. Of all living things in the jungle they were the only ones whom Varden had cause to dread, and they only when they could come at him unaware or in overwhelming force. With his repeating rifle and automatic pistol he could account for a score of them in fair fight, but he dreaded the silent stab in the dark, the swift flight of a poisoned arrow, which was their favorite method of attack, and against which he must be constantly upon the alert.

As he paused at the top of a little slope to peer cautiously around before beginning the descent, the traveler made a fine picture of robust manhood. He was not especially tall, but his chest was deep and his shoulders were very broad, giving his figure a suggestion of stockiness and great strength which was enhanced by his lean, bronzed features and keen eyes. He was dressed roughly as became a worker in the wilderness; a soft felt hat covered his head, and around his middle was a full cartridge-belt that supported his pistol and a long knife. The little knapsack on his back and the rifle in his hand completed his equipment, for since his escape from the bushmen he had been forced to subsist almost entirely upon such small game as he could kill en route.

SATISFIED that for the time being he was safe, he proceeded along the trail, walking swiftly and noiselessly with the tireless stride of the trained woodsman. In places this trail, or runway, was sunken below the level of the surrounding soil for several feet so that Varden was buried in it up to his shoulders, sometimes even over his head, as tho he walked in a ditch. At intervals the path broadened somewhat, but always it twisted in and out between tree trunks; a narrow ribbon bisecting the heart of a dank and rotten world. Varden plodded steadily on, panting and sweating in the humid, stagnant air. From certain indications he judged that he was in the neighborhood of some native village and his eyes were constantly searching for an enemy, altho it was impossible to see far on account of the dense growth.

He was immersed in a sea of rank vegetation. All around him the huge-rooted trees grew so close together that a child could hardly have squeezed between them; coiled and knotted lianas of the girth of a man's leg were festooned from branch to branch or hung overhead in tangled abandon like monstrous webs. Unhealthy looking plants, fan-leaved and many-colored, exuded a slimy moisture from their pores as a body exudes sweat. Here and there stately gingko and banyan trees, with their queer dropping roots, formed islands amid the riot of creepers, and beneath their matted tops all daylight was drowned and only midnight gloom remained. Ferns and mosses and hundreds of parasitic and fungoid growths covered the ground, and the humid atmosphere itself seemed to afford roothold to gossamer webs. Orchids of a thousand gorgeous hues met the eye on all sides, spreading their unhealthy petals in the scant sunshine which seeped thru the woven arch. It was a weird, mysterious forest; a place of awful silence, wherein naught moved save odd-looking birds and small monkeys, and as they moved these creatures uttered neither song nor chatter. The entire lack of sound was throttling.

Varden gave little heed to all this. He was used to it. His sole concern was to get thru it as quickly and easily as he could and to keep a wary eye meanwhile for enemies and hidden pitfalls. More than once, warned by some misplaced leaf or other faint sign which his practiced eyes picked out, he stopped and carefully edged around a hidden stake or poisoned spear, that had been placed there by the bushmen to guard the path against chance intruders. Once a great snake lay coiled directly in the trail and the traveler was obliged to make a wearisome detour in order to avoid it, for he did not wish to shoot except in self-defense. The way was beset with a thousand annoyances, dangers lurked on every hand, and with them all was the awful heat and the sticky, stagnant air which seemed to afford barely enough food for the lungs. But he kept on steadily, eating up the miles with remarkable speed, all things considered.

It was high noon when he reached a wider portion of the trail in which the verdure was a little less dense and where an opening between the treetops gave a scant glimpse of the sky. Here he halted, and he was in the act of shrugging the straps of his knapsack out of the ruts they had furrowed in his shoulders, intending to eat his lunch before he went any

farther, when there was a sharp whizzing sound and then a dull plop just above his ear. At the same instant something jerked violently at his hat.

Varden had been under fire before and his reaction was practically instantaneous. A single long jump carried him to a huge gnarled root which jutted out into the path not far away. He crouched behind this and swept the walls of the jungle with a quick glance, cocking his rifle with his thumb as he did so. He thought he saw a faint indication of movement behind some vines a few yards away and he sent two lightning shots into their leafy depths.

As the sharp reports reverberated thru the forest a red-brown shadow dropped from the forked branch of a tree ten feet above the path, landed springily on hands and knees and leaped along the runway. It was hard for Varden to realize that the moving figure was a man, so closely did his naked form blend with the tree trunks, flashing in and out between them like some sprite or goblin of the jungle. Before he could get out of sight, however, the American's rifle cracked once more, and like a stricken buck the bushman sprang into the air, came down sprawling, and lay still.

Still crouching, Varden peered from behind the root and waited further developments. He was too old a hand at jungle warfare to be caught off his guard. The warrior might have been alone, but it was equally possible that a dozen of his comrades were lurking behind the leaves ready to launch their poisoned darts at the first glimpse of their quarry. Varden knew those darts. Up to a certain limited distance they were even more deadly than a rifle bullet; their slightest prick meant death in its most horrible form.

Several minutes went by during which the jungle silence was unbroken by any sound. Convinced finally that he had disposed of his only enemy and anxious to get away before the reports of his rifle brought other bushmen to the vicinity, Varden pushed three fresh cartridges into the magazine of his weapon and stepped out into the trail. He was half way to the spot where the dead native lay, when a sudden sound and agitation of the foliage twenty yards distant caused him to halt and swing his rifle into line. Then he gasped—and stared.

AT THE edge of the trail, partly framed in the filmy tendrils of some creeping plants thru which she had just pushed her way, stood a woman. She was facing the traveler, and she was as motionless as the trees which banked the path on either side. Too dazed to even lower his rifle, the muzzle of which still pointed toward her, Varden stood like a graven image, speechless, staring with popping eyes. He was looking upon a miracle—a thing beyond words or reason—a white woman!

A narrow sunbeam sifted down thru the canopy of leaves and shone full upon her head and shoulders, striking answering gleams from the mass of soft brown hair which showed beneath the felt hat she was wearing. She was dressed man-fashion in a close-fitting suit of some drab material and she carried a rifle in one hand, but her male attire could not hide her sex. Varden could have been no more dumfounded if she had been clad in a Parisian evening-gown.

For a space the two stared at each other in silence; then the girl—Varden could see now that she was very young—stepped forward into the path. Her dark eyes met his searching stare with a delicate blush of tan. The corners of her soft mouth wrinkled into a little smile. Like a flash of light it struck Varden that she was very pretty—almost beautiful.

"I startled you, I'm afraid," she said, speaking English in a soft, slightly husky voice, "I'm sorry. But don't you think you might lower your rifle? I'm all alone—you have nothing to fear."

Varden flushed and dropped the muzzle of the weapon instantly. Her calm, matter-of-fact tone was the one thing needed to bring him back to earth. It was not until she spoke that he was fully sure that the whole thing was not a dream.

"I—I beg your pardon," he stammered. "I know I've been staring like a fool, but I'm just down from up country—a year in the bush—your sudden appearance. I——"

"You're surprised," she finished for him. "Of course I can see and understand that; it is natural enough; but I am not—much. I've been, in a way, almost expecting you, you see."

"You've been expecting me!" Varden's jaw dropped as he repeated her words, wondering if after all the whole thing were not a dream—if he would not wake up presently. If he had been surprised at first, he was shocked almost dumb now.

"Yes," she said soberly, "I've been expecting you. I suppose it seems very strange to you, but I've been hoping for a long time that you would come. I was told—but never mind. Here in the jungle, you know, one learns to believe in certain things; prayers for instance. And besides, there was Maka's prophecy. You'll think it very odd when I tell you that I've been praying for you to come. That is," she added quickly, "if you are what I hope that you are."

"And that is?" he asked, sure now that he was dreaming, for certainly no other explanation could account for the strangeness of her words.

"A man," she answered simply.

Varden made no reply to this and for a little they were silent again. His brain felt too confused, too dazed, for coherent reasoning just then, and in an effort to cover the pause he changed the subject abruptly.

"It isn't any too safe standing here like this," he said. "There are bushmen about. I've just accounted for one of them, but there are probably more in the neighborhood, and if you know of a sheltered spot we'd better be on our way to it. This is a poor place to stand off an attack."

"We're perfectly safe for the present," she said confidently. "Standing here in the open has already proved that. The fellow who shot that dart into your hat was probably alone and even if others come there is no cause for apprehension. They all know me, you see, and up to a certain limit they will do as I say; at any rate, until they have seen Moreau. It is unfortunate, however, that you were forced to kill the man—it may cause trouble later."

Varden nodded. Just who Moreau might be he could not guess, nor did he ask just then. Instead, he removed his hat and glanced at it. Sticking into the heavy felt midway between brim and peak was a slender thorn, dark-brown in color and about three inches long. He smiled grimly as he shook it onto the ground and replaced his head covering.

"Rather a near thing," he remarked.

"But very crude for a bushman," the girl commented. "They usually hit what they aim at. Fortunate, tho, for—us."

The tone in which this was said and the significant way in which she had included herself in the speech brought a twinkle into Varden's eyes. This girl was not only pretty, she was unusual. So unusual that he found it a little hard to keep up with her mentally.

"Let me introduce myself," he suggested. "My name is Varden—Hugh Varden—American—orchid hunter and explorer. I've been back yonder for a little more than a year gathering specimens."

"Alone, Mr. Varden?"

"No; that is, not until recently. Two weeks or so ago my men were surrounded by head-hunters while I was absent from camp. All of them were killed, I think. I managed to fight my way thru the dozen or so who trailed me and I've been working my way South ever since. Up to ten minutes ago I would have sworn that there was not another white man within a hundred miles; much less a white woman."

"Naturally," she admitted, smiling, "but my presence is easily accounted for. I've lived near here for a long time. My father's business keeps him in Borneo and I stay with him when I can. The natives hereabouts know us. They won't harm me, but they don't like strangers."

VARDEN nodded. "So I've discovered," he agreed drily, "but that is to be expected. I didn't come here for my health exactly. I've seen a good deal of bushmen and their ways during the past twelve months."

The girl looked him up and down appraisingly and her dark eyes flashed.

"You look and talk like an educated man—a gentleman," she burst out frankly. "Heaven grant that you are that and more, for I must trust you as I never thought to trust any man. Our village—the village in which we live—is not very far away. My father is there with his beasts and nearly two hundred Dyaks. Left to themselves, these Dyaks would be friendly and harmless enough; they are just overgrown children when not aroused; but they are controlled by a—a devil, a super-beast, a man of no race, who is as clever as he is evil. This man is my—our—enemy; in a sense we—Dad and I—are his prisoners. That's why I've been praying for a white man—for you—to come to our aid. Dad is too old and sick to struggle much, and—and there are other reasons."

"Prisoners?" Varden repeated questionably. "But you were alone here. You have the freedom of the jungle?"

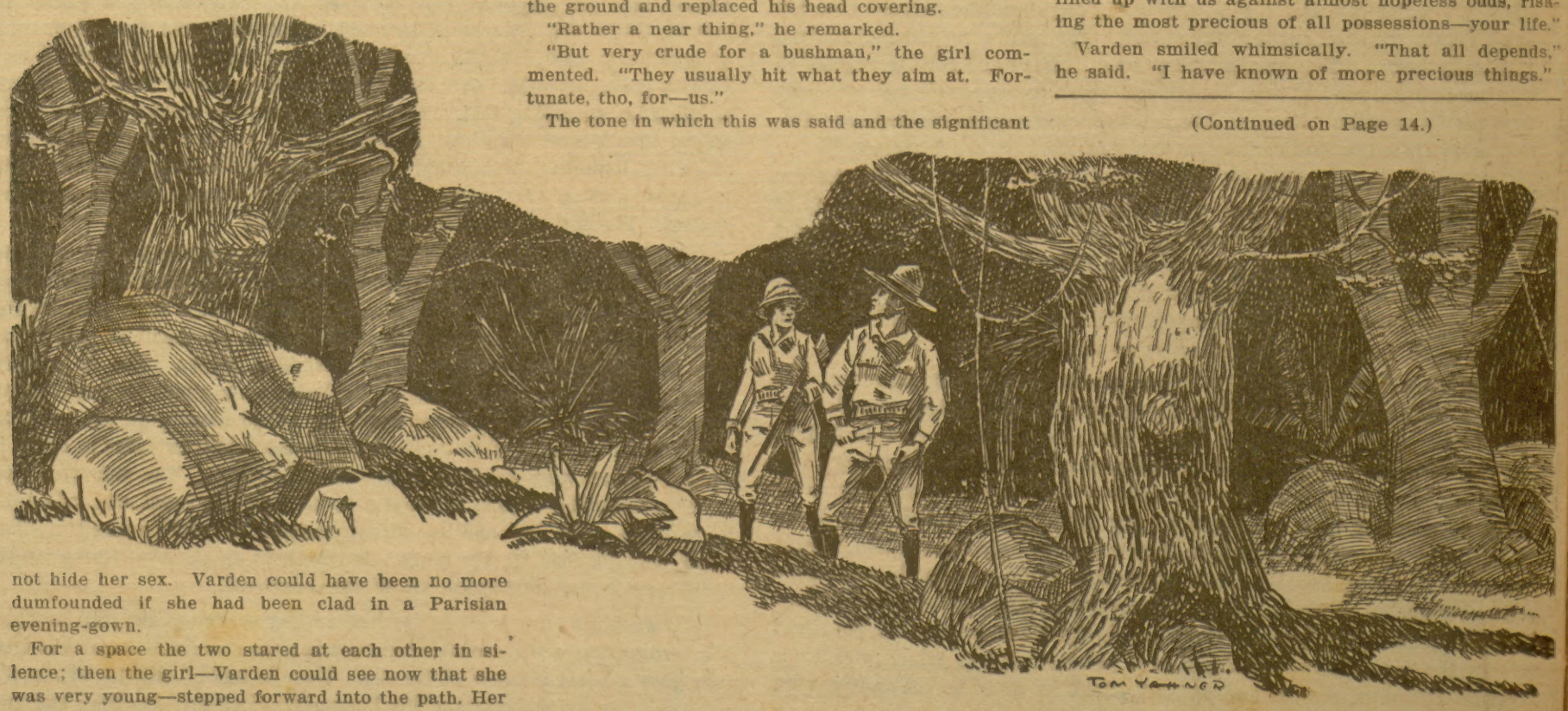
"Such as it is, yes," she answered, "but what good is it? There is no one here to help us. Besides, Moreau knows that I will never try to run away without Dad. Oh, he is clever, I tell you, this enemy of ours. He allows me just so much freedom as pleases him—no more."

"I see," said Varden, altho the matter was still far from clear to him. "You want me to help you get away. Is that it?"

"Yes," she answered again. "I ask you without hope of reward to put yourself in great danger for the sake of two strangers, one of whom, at first, may seem to be your enemy. If you accept, you will be lined up with us against almost hopeless odds, risking the most precious of all possessions—your life."

Varden smiled whimsically. "That all depends," he said. "I have known of more precious things."

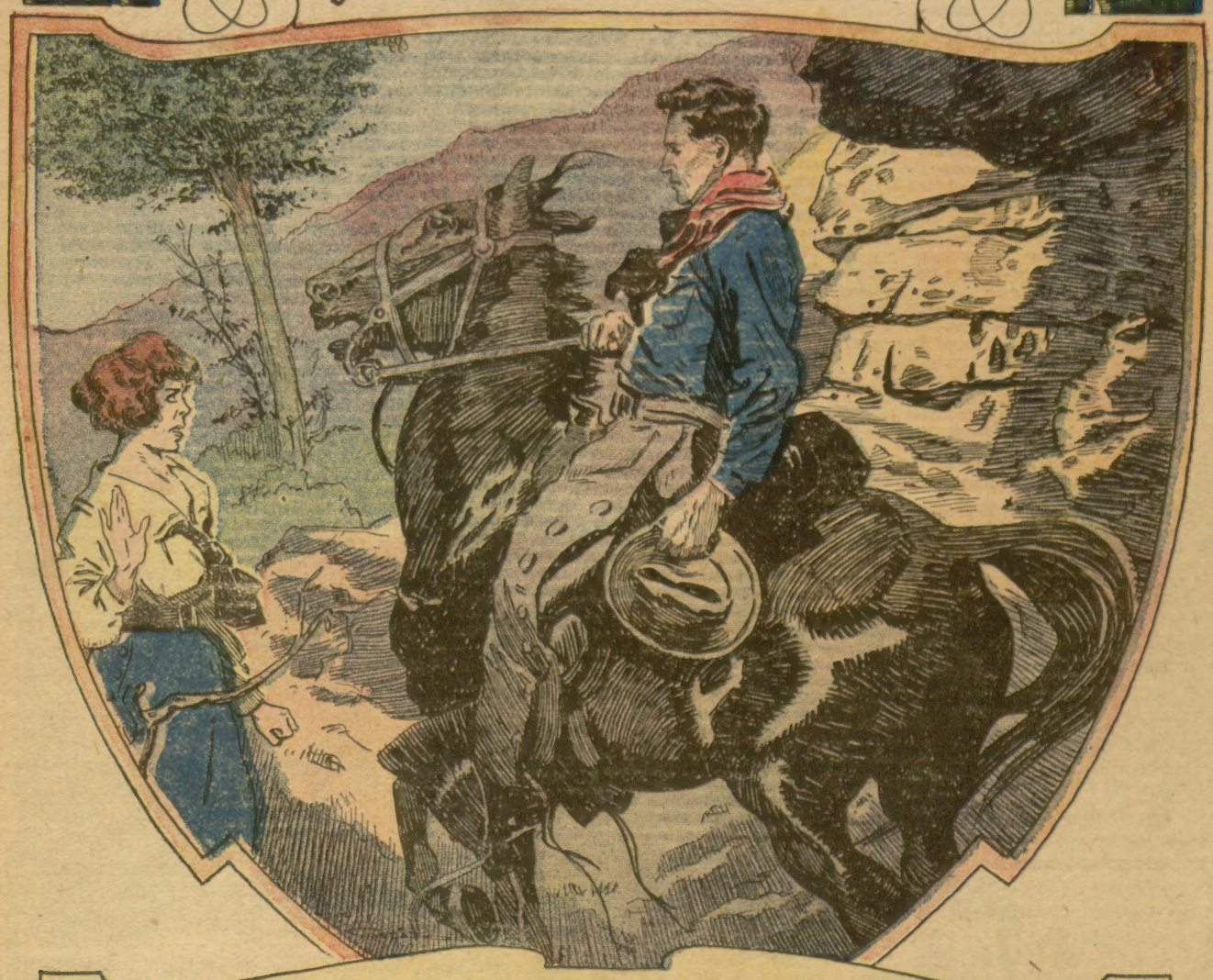
(Continued on Page 14.)



Soon They Could Walk Side by Side Beneath Huge Trees Which Rose Up at Intervals Between Great Rocks and Broken Bowlders.

The TEMPEST BORN

By WILLARD E. HAWKINS



Trembling With Anger, She Drew Her Little Form Erect. "Kiss You!" She Mocked Unthinkingly. "You, Buck, You Ain't Even a Low-down Purp! Any Dog's Got More Fight in Him. You're Even Lower 'n a Greaser!"

"I DON'T want no unpleasantness," said old man Peters, casually fingering his shotgun, "so I reckon we'll call it square ef you clear out o' the country and don't never show your face around here no more."

And Buck Williams, because he desired unpleasantness even less than the ranchman, silently packed his gun, his blankets, and a few belongings that could be carried behind him on the saddle, and, under the eye of old man Peters, slowly rode away.

From a high, rugged crag overlooking the cabin, Marcia Peters watched the encounter, the blood pounding rapidly thru her veins. And as she saw the cringing obedience of the younger man, all the love for him withered out of her heart, to be replaced by a contempt so deep that its intensity made her whole body tremble. Scrambling from the crag, she raced down the uneven rock slope, circling toward the wagon road, so that as Buck slowly rounded the bend her streaming red hair and panting figure burst upon his startled view.

"H'low, Marsh!" he exclaimed in surprise. Then, with a furtive backward glance: "Gimme a kiss, Marsh. I'm goin' away for a little whiles."

Trembling with anger, she drew her little figure erect. "Kiss you!" she mocked witheringly. "You, Buck, you ain't even a low-down purp. Any dog's got some fight in him. You're even lower 'n a greaser!"

Buck's eyes narrowed and his head sank between his shoulders, much as if he had been enduring a shower of physical blows.

"Now, Marsh," he began protestingly. "You don't mean all that. What could I 'a' done, even if——"

"Act like a man—that's what you might 'a' done! But it ain't in you. That's why I headed you off—so'st you could go away knowing how I despise and hate you—you sneakin', contemptible coyote!"

Then, before he could protest, she had turned and was darting with the quickness of a wild thing among the trees and rocks that almost immediately hid her from his view.

That evening, as they finished supper, Peters mentioned the subject for the first time.

"I give him a chance, Marsh," he pleaded. "'F he'd stood up for hisself, I wouldn't 'a' had no more to say. But he slunk off like a whipped cur. He ain't half a man, Marshy. I don't 'low they's even a spark o' real manhood in him."

"I ain't sore at you, Pap," she replied. "Don't never need worry 'bout me carin' for no coward."

POSSIBLY it was this remark that caused Peters to regard Buck Williams with indifference when he came across him during one of his visits to town some months later. Emboldened by this attitude and doubtless counting on the lapse of time to smooth over the enmity which arose from his clandestine love affair with the ranchman's daughter, Williams drifted back to his cabin beneath the beetling cliff and resumed his former life.

If it appeared strange that one of his stamp should have succeeded for a time in capturing the imagination of the ranch girl, the matter may seem clearer when her lonely life is taken into consideration. Of the few men she knew, Buck Williams was by far the handsomest in his swarthy fashion. His occupation as a guide for the tourist parties which visited the region in summer left him with abundant leisure, just when the passionate blood which coursed thru Marcia's veins had commenced to awaken the latent woman in her.

When Buck returned, however, Marcia's half defined heart hunger was being better satisfied than ever under his tutelage. Possibly Buck would have calmly accepted the scorn of his former sweetheart had she found no one in the meantime to fill his place. But when his shrewd, furtive eyes discovered what was by no means entirely apparent—that the young "city feller" who had taken the Marsdale ranchhouse at the entrance to Beever Gulch was supplanting him in the regard he had failed to deserve—the germ of bitterness found dwelling in his thoughts, there to be nourished until it became a jealous hatred.

To Melville Darget the guide was merely a picturesque character from whom a certain amount of quiet amusement could be extracted. He employed the young mountaineer frequently on horseback excursions, and Williams never by word or deed indicated that he knew when his employer was poking fun at him. Neither did he appear to observe the progress of affairs between Marcia and the city man.

It had been Darget's whim, when the doctor delivered his sentence, to spend his six months of enforced idleness in a spot removed from the resorts usually sought by tourists and health seekers. He had found what suited him fairly well in the Marsdale ranch cabin, which had been abandoned because of the unproductive soil surrounding. As a place for the comfortable gaining of a livelihood it was a demonstrated failure, but in point of wild, scenic ruggedness it left nothing to be desired. In this lonely spot Darget settled down with his pipe and the half formed intention to try his hand at writing a novel. It only dawned upon him gradually what poor company a man's thoughts can be, unrelieved by other companionship.

When Williams returned, the affair had progressed far beyond its slow, immature beginnings. The occasional meetings had grown into almost daily frequency, trysts which had come to mean almost the whole of the girl's existence, and which affected Darget more than he would have been ready to admit. There was all the fascination in the companionship of the fiery, passionate mountain girl that there is in playing with any form of pleasant danger. The clandestine nature of the daily meetings no doubt intensified their significance to both.

IT WAS this feature that first attracted Buck's consideration. There was no apparent reason why the Easterner should not pay his attentions openly to the ranchman's daughter. Logically reasoning—with a brain no doubt clearer for the purpose than Marcia's—Buck came to the conclusion that Darget's intentions were anything but serious, and a plan for revenge gradually took form in his mind.

As yet the details were vague. But he could afford to bide his time, meanwhile keeping his eyes open for the opportunity which was sure to come. Each day that he waited, studying the habits of the oblivious pair, the plan rounded more into shape.

The attitude of the man grew more loverlike, that of the girl one of greater surrender. As if by accident they met, sometimes in the woods by the creek, sometimes on horseback at one point or another along the branch road that led past the ranch house up Beever Gulch, and always toward the middle of the afternoon, when Marcia's father and practically every one on the ranch were busily engaged. The few occasions on which they were seen together by any one except Buck hardly constituted grounds of comment.

But this one witness scarcely for a day lost view of the lovers. Even when his plan had fully matured, he repressed his impatience and waited for the flame to grow a little fiercer and brighter. One afternoon he had the rare fortune to creep within eavesdropping distance as the two sat on the bank of the stream, Darget engaged in the idle pretense of fishing.

"It'll be a surprise, won't it, Mel?" the girl was saying. "But Pap'll feel kind o' bad over it, I'm 'feared. You see—well, Pap don't want to let me go."

"Has any one ever tried to take you from him?" inquired Darget lazily.

"That'd be telling."

ENSUED a little struggle; then Darget's voice laughingly commanded:

"Fess up. I won't let you go until you tell me."

"Stop pinching my arm! There, everybody'll know you've been kissing me by the looks o' my hair. I wa'nt goin' to tell you, 'cause you'll laugh at me, and 'sides, I'm 'shamed of it. Could you ever b'lieve I once thought I was in love with Buck?"

"Buck Williams?" The man's voice rang out in a peal of amused laughter. "Honestly, little girl, I thought better of you. So I have a rival?"

"You don't believe that, Mel! Why, I didn't even know hardly what a real man looked like. I was that silly and foolish. And when I told Pap, he said he'd go over and show me what kind of a breed Buck was. So Pap took a shotgun and drove him away—and if Buck had showed any real manhood, Pap was ready to let him marry me, p'raps. Wasn't that a close call?"

"So your father took a shotgun to him. Does he always use that method to learn the intentions of your admirers?"

"I get my red hair from Pap," she responded simply. "That's why I think we'd oughtter begin to get him prepared."

"H-m. "Let's wait a little longer. Just about the time I get ready to leave we can break it to him; then, if he objects——"

"You'll take me with you, anyhow?" she demanded breathlessly.

"That's the ticket, little girl."

Buck Williams slipped away noiselessly. And toward sunset, after the lovers had parted, he met Darget with impassive countenance and led him, by subtle suggestion, thru a thick tangle of trees and saplings to the point where Horseshoe Creek widened to the dignity of a river as it rounded a sharp bend. Opposite was a narrow ledge of wooded shore, above which the cliffs rose sheer and unscalable.

"Pretty view, huh?" said Buck cunningly. "Look, I'll show you suthin'."

He led the way down a steep, brush-covered declivity to the edge of the creek. Parting the willow branches, he stepped out over the water. Darget, following curiously at his heels, saw that the brush concealed a slender foot bridge, so frail that it swayed in the wind, yet firmly suspended by rope cables from either end.

"Had a mind to build a shack over here," commented Buck as they gained the other embankment. "Purty place, but it's too all-fired lonesome."

Darget was eagerly penetrating the little thicket. He clambered to the top of a jagged rock which commanded a view of the surroundings.

"Jove!" he exclaimed. "It is a pretty place."

"Don't no one 'cept me know there's such a bridge any wheres along the river," boasted Williams with a crafty glance at his companion.

"Keep it dark, Buck, and I'll see that you don't lose. Some afternoons I may want to come here to write, and I wouldn't like to be disturbed."

SO FAR, Buck's scheme was working smoothly. He knew that the narrow stretch of woodland would appeal to Darget as an ideal trysting place. From Buck's point of view it was an ideal trap. If he bided his time carefully the opportunity to compromise the girl who had scorned him and the rival who laughed at him would surely come. Buck intended that old man Peters, who gave Marcia her red hair, should be on hand at his little party.

Possibly the guide had never heard that "hell has no fury like a woman scorned," but he could imagine very clearly the explosion which would ensue if the ranch girl discovered that she had been trifled with.

And at the very moment when he was laying a train for this explosion, the opportunity to make it far more effective was on its way.

"Step in, Buck," said Darget casually, as they gained the branch road. "I've some letters for you to mail when you go to town."

While the other started his kitchen fire, Buck waited in the study, his eyes taking in every detail. The writing table under the east window drew his gaze.

Buck strained his ears intently toward the kitchen. Then he rose and glided casually to the window. Quickly he deciphered the words on the exposed sheet of note paper.

Dearest Little Wifey:

I can't understand your impatience at the tone of my letters. Of course, I am crazy to see you, but it would be out of the question for you to join me—because of many reasons. You say that not hearing from me to the contrary by the 20th you will start West. Consider this a most emphatic request not to do so. I could not bear to subject you to the hardships of this life, little woman, even for a short time. Be patient a month or so longer, and then——

No wonder Darget was pursuing his love affair so secretly! The possibilities opened up by the reading of this letter made Buck fairly tremble with fearful anticipation. Darget entered a moment later, scribbled off a few lines to complete the epistle, then directed an envelope. It bore the superscription: "Arabella Lee Darget."

"For my sister," he observed carelessly. "It is rather important. If you can mail it tonight, I'd appreciate the favor."

Veiling his triumph behind a mask of indifference, Buck took the missive.

"IT'S plumb fortunate," remarked Buck some ten days later, as he assisted his stylishly dressed passenger into the runabout, "as how I happened to drive in for supplies this arternoon. Sure, I c'n take you to where your husband lives. Why, him and me is almost pals."

"Strange," she observed in a troubled tone, "that he didn't meet me today. Is it very far?"

"We'll reach there little afore sunset," replied Buck. "I ain't gonna lose no time, 'cause it shore looks like rain."

His apprehensions were more than justified. In a driving torrent they drew up, wet and bedraggled, before Darget's summer cottage. The house was deserted. Buck knew it would be. And strange to say—perhaps the cold rain had dampened his passion—the part he had rehearsed so many times seemed to have lost some of its zest.

"I suppose the first thing to do is to make a fire," said Arabella Lee Darget, sinking wearily into a chair.

There was a catch in her voice that gave Buck an uncomfortable sensation. And when she unwound her veil, revealing a tired, wan little countenance, trying bravely to smile up at him, he turned away abruptly.

After all, his revenge would be sufficiently complete without her presence.

"Mebby I can find yore husband," he said gruffly, his hands busy at the fireplace. "I know a place by the river where he goes to write sometimes."

A sudden gust of wind rattled the windows in their loose frames, just as the door flew open. Darget's wife started up eagerly. But if she expected to greet her husband, she was doomed to disappointment, for it was old man Peters who stood in the opening.

His eyes rested only for a moment on the strange woman.

"You, Buck!" he exclaimed. "You seen anything o' Marshy?"

Buck turned deathly pale. "Ain't she—ain't she to hum?" he articulated faintly.

"Ain't been there all arternoon. Thought she might 'a' took hidin' here from the storm. Pray Gord she ain't got caught up Horseshoe Gulch. The dam's giving 'way, an' there's h—l to pay!"

Forgetful of his guilty terror—forgetful of his long coveted revenge—in two strides Buck crossed the floor and gripped the arm of Peters with the frenzy of a madman.

"The dam!" he cried. "What about the dam?"

TERROR is infectious. Peters, who had been already half frantic with apprehension, blocked his way.

"What d' ye know!" he insisted fiercely.

Hardly aware what he did, Buck Williams brushed the other man aside. They heard a clatter of furniture and kitchen utensils in the next room. A moment later he returned, his arms filled with a tangle of rope.

"I got a lariat hitched to my saddle," shouted Peters with a glance of understanding.

Darget's wife gathered this much—that there was danger for those out in the storm. As Buck struggled for the reins under his horse's feet, she appeared beside the runabout.

"Out o' the way!" shouted Buck rudely. "You ain't goin' on this."

"I am going to help find my husband," she insisted defiantly. And because argument would take up valuable time, Buck lifted her to the seat and sprang in beside her, lashing the jaded horse cruelly.

Old man Peters was close at his heels and Mrs. Darget was stumbling along some distance to the rear as he pushed thru the sodden brush to the crest of the embankment overlooking the river bend. A seething cauldron of frenzied waters swirled beneath their feet, tearing the bank away in great chunks that crumbled as if by magic and joined the chaos of uprooted trees and debris that tossed on the agitated surface of the torrent. Even the high embankment trembled from the onslaught and threatened to engulf them all in the flood.

Buck strained his eyes toward the black cliff which towered over the opposite side. The stretch of shore upon which he had walked a few days before with Melville Darget was as if it had never been.

"Oh, my Gord!" shivered Williams, his eyes starting from their sockets with horror. "Oh, my Gord, I never meant nothing like this!"

Peters roughly grasped his arm. Above that thundering onrush, their voices were inaudible; but Williams understood the eager pointing.

At first glimpse everything in that foaming river was in motion. In the thickening gloom it was only by accident that Peters noted an object on the far side of the torrent, against which the waters beat and dashed into spray at the impotence of their attack. As if it dared the elements to do their worst, a jagged spire of granite uptilted defiantly against the stream. On this tiny isle of safety there seemed—yes, beyond question of doubt there was—an object that moved. Were there two? Fervently as he hoped, Buck could not discern.

Peters was hastily gathering up the coils of the lariat. The seething waters seeming to be rising rather than diminishing, and at any moment there was danger that the refugees would be swept from their position by one of the great trees which tossed on the mighty flood.

STRAIGHT and true, despite the wind and rain, flew the lasso cast by old Jed Peters. It fell short of the mark by a third of its length, and the sudden tug of the current almost tore it from his grasp.

A splice was quickly made, after which, with this added length, he repeated his throw. This time the wind carried the noose below the rock. Then Peters whirled the sodden coil a third time and it dropped square and true over the refugees.

Dimly the two men discerned the motions which fitted the noose over the projecting spire. Clutching the line and bracing their feet with grim desperation, they waited for the expected strain. Even Mrs. Darget, silent, horrified spectator, added her puny strength.

Then the three staggered backward, sprawling in the mud. Their first thought was that the line had snapped, but examination showed that the noose had simply slipped over the end of the rock. The spire slanted in their direction too abruptly to allow of carrying out their purpose.

At the realization, Buck Williams went mad. Out there, in mid-stream, clinging tenaciously to her last moments of life, was the girl to whom he made love, who had scorched his soul with her scorn, and who was perishing before his eyes as the result of his jealous treachery.

It was not the old Buck Williams who gathered up the coils of rope he had carried from the runabout and ran with the heavy burden along the crumbling bank upstream. The spirit which inspired his muscles was the wild elemental spirit of the tempest, which feared neither wind nor flood. If, somewhere in this whirlwind of determined passion, there existed the Buck Williams of old, he formed such an insignificant part as to be lost.

Peters had hopelessly gathered the lariat for another throw. Successful with the cast, he glanced around. Following the gaze of Darget's wife, some twenty yards upstream, he beheld a man leaping into the torrent.

Cunningly had Buck calculated the flow of the river, when he made his rope fast to a projecting root and, with the other end secured around his waist, dived from the embankment. At the point he selected an object would be drawn diagonally across the stream as the waters rebounded sharply from the sudden curve of the bank. To direct one's course by swimming in that maelstrom was absurd even to think of. But his body was certain to be carried somewhere to the other side of the tiny refuge rock. There was one chance in fifty that there would be a spark of life in the body when it reached its destination, and on this chance Buck gambled.

As if the elements recognized a part of their own essence, they gave him safe passage across the flood, protecting him from masses of debris that could easily have battered him into pulp. Bewildered, gasping for the breath which had been hammered from his body, Buck shot to the surface, just in time to glimpse the rugged rock mass before he hurtled against it, skull foremost.

THE shock of contact did not even stun him. Vaguely surprised to find himself alive, he clutched the rock in a desperate embrace, and knew that he had won. The fleshy part of Darget's leg, hanging over the edge, had prevented Buck's head from cracking like an eggshell.

Crouching close to the spire, clinging partly to it and partly to the senseless body of Melville Darget, was Marcia, spent and staring-eyed, but with lips compressed in a firm line of determination. An ugly gash in the side of Darget's head indicated that he had been struck senseless by some hurtling object.

Buck saw that the girl held one end of the lariat tossed by her father's hands. He felt the rope around his own waist tighten, and knew that Peters was playing his part on shore.

Clinging half submerged with one arm and both knees, Buck drew forth his knife and gripped it between his teeth. From the girl's benumbed fingers he disentangled the lariat and drew it toward him until four or five feet hung slack. He slashed with the knife until this short length had been severed. Suspending it from the line, one end of which was fastened securely around his waist, he formed a sort of life belt, on the principle of a breeches bouy, with the iron lariat eye in place of a pulley block to ease the friction. This harness he fastened to the remaining length of the lasso rope that it might be drawn ashore.

His preparations completed, Buck braced his feet against the rock and signaled Marcia to fasten herself in the dangling noose.

She shook her head, tugging at the body which hung over the rock. Buck knew from the look in her eyes that she meant he was first to save the unconscious man, and that it would be useless to argue.

But she pitted her will against a hitherto unknown Buck Williams—born that

(Concluded on Page 15.)

Life on the Mississippi

Today is but a step from the day when there were few or no railroads; when the old Mississippi River that trails majestically today along its 2,000 mile course was the great traffic artery of America; when wood-burning steamboats by the hundreds plied their way up and down from Minnesota to Louisiana; when reckless, daring gamblers in their long black coats and gray slouch hats infested every boat like insects; when slaves were sold on the block like cattle to the highest bidder; when plantation owners and their sons thought nothing of "runnin' down to N'O'leans fo' a couple o' weeks, sah," there to live the fast gay life in that mad, bad metropolis of America; when Memphis was the great trading center for slavery; when the unknown "Abolitionists" ran escaping slaves from one to another along the great secret "undergrown passage" into Canada.

When Randall Parrish wrote the story which begins in next week's Ledger, he painted a magic picture of those fascinating days of "befo' de wah," and at the same time rang up the curtain on a swiftly moving drama, full of surprise and suspense, with a white negress playing a quite unexpected part in the plot.

Why sit and wish for a magic time-machine to swish us out of these days of toil and turmoil? Let's board the stern-wheeler that leaves "Ledger Landing" next week, and take a trip back to the most fascinating colorful days of this country's existence.

"The Devil's Own"

begins in the next Ledger. It's the round-trip ticket on the time-machine. And—s-s-h-h!—we're doing something decidedly novel. We're leading off with a chunky, meaty installment of 10,000 round words. If you doubt it, count 'em. A fifth of a book!

The steamboat whistle's blowing. All aboard!

The Dark Mirror

By Louis Joseph Vance

"How Would You Like Me to Tip Off Red Carnehan Where to Look for You?"

The Facts in the Strangest Story of the Year

LEONORA was a girl of the underworld. Some of her associates were Harry the Nut, Leo Bielinsky or Leo the Blood, Inez, English Addie, Charlie the Coke, and her lover,

RED CARNEHAN, the gunman. That is to say—Red loved Leonora, but Leonora had promised

MARIO, a well-educated and well-to-do Spaniard studying down in the Bohemian section of the city, that she would marry him and run away from the gang and Red. For, indeed, it was Mario that she loved.

Then came the night of the pistol battle when Ennis and Corbin, two plainclothesmen pursuing Leo the Blood into the gang's headquarters, were killed by Red's automatic, adding two murders to that just perpetrated by Leo. And amid the excitement, Red got Leonora down the fire escape into the darkness where she lost consciousness.

But all this the dream! All this the fantasy! All this but one of the wild nightmarish imaginings which for life had entered the dreams of, and had troubled and frightened

PRISCILLA MAINE, wealthy and single girl, living in Fifth avenue, New York, with her aunt,

MRS. TROWBRIDGE. This was why she at last took her problem to

DR. PHILLIP FOSDICK, who had known her almost from babyhood. Fosdick was a specialist in psychical and mental diseases, and derangements of the nervous system. He heard her thru. He wrote every detail of her last night's dream down on paper. Then, with grave face, he showed her a newspaper in which every occurrence of her dream was found to have taken place in a pistol battle in the underworld the night before.

Fosdick, however, resolved to uncover this mystery—the mystery of a girl who in her dreams was some one else, mingling with underworld characters who actually existed. The reason, of course, was that he loved her. Searching back in her life, he found nothing illuminating. Her father,

HENRY HOBART MAINE, had been an artist. Her mother had died—at least no one knew anything of her. Then Fosdick uncovered a something. He found that a picture Priscilla had painted of herself in her studio, dressed in gypsy costume, was hypnotizing the girl. Then came to her another horrible dream. She found herself, as Leonora, living in a cheap room. Came Charlie the Coke to tell her to go to where Red was hiding without delay. She awoke from it, terrified, and she knew she must somehow follow out the adventures of this kindred soul, Leonora, which had been cut short by her awakening.

She went to bed, first gazing long at a brightly lighted clock face on her bureau, and suddenly sank into sleep. Again she was Leonora, treading thru the city streets in a terrible rain. When she reached the opium den where she was to meet Charlie, she found Charlie stupefied with the drug, and Inez there to take her to Red's hiding place. Across the city they went; thence across the roof of a tenement house, and, knocking on a door to which Inez pointed, Leonora found herself facing Mario, her lover. Priscilla's dream, however, was suddenly broken by the ringing of the phone. Fosdick was on the wire. He had found the real Leonora, he told her, following the girl to an underworld tenement. As Priscilla hung up the receiver close to her bed, she dropped back to the dream again. Once more she was in Mario's rooms. But as Mario left her there alone, the door opened and in came Red. "Where's that d—n Wop?" he shrilled. "I'll kill him now!"

But in her dream, Priscilla saw herself pretending to make love to Red, to swerve him from his purpose. Then a tenement fire swooped down up them. And once more she found herself in the arms of Mario, Red disappearing in the confusion. And from this dream, too, she awoke, sobbing as tho her heart would break.

Two days later Fosdick reported to her. The real Carnehan, he said, had been supposedly found dead in a burned tenement building. The real Leonora and the real Mario had registered at a hotel as man and wife, evidently having married. He had also located a

MOTHER O'MORE, with whom the girl Leonora had at one time lived. Priscilla, encouraged, worked and played night and day—and took sleeping potions, so that the dreams might not come. Standing one day in front of her framed picture in an art gallery window, she came face to face with Harry the Nut and Inez. This time it was no dream! She was facing two real persons. And they appeared to recognize her as Leonora.

This story began in No. 37 of the Ledger for Sept. 11. Back copies may be obtained from our agents or newsdealers.

CHAPTER XXXII.
FOREBODINGS.

ONLY with the four walls of her own room shutting out the world was Priscilla able to take up the task of rebuilding equanimity out of chaos of shattered nerves and scattered wits.

By sheer force of will she made herself reconstruct and review that adventure which had loosed panic upon her in the crowded street and driven her, a hunted thing, to seek revenge in flight.

There could be no question as to the identity of the two people she had seen, but they singularly were and at the same time were not the Inez and Harry the Nut whom Priscilla had known in her dreams.

It is surprising how painstakingly the attention will record immaterial details in moments of shock. In all respects but one Priscilla's impressions of the meeting on the Avenue, from the instant of recognition until the time when she found herself in a hansom cab, sedately jogging homeward, many blocks north of the Harkness Galleries, were confused and inconsecutive.

She remembered turning suddenly, spurred by a sharp impulse of unreasoning affright; she had hazy memories of madly elbowing her way to the curb, of the amazed faces of those she jostled, of the stupid red countenance of the cabby who reined in to her shrill call, of coming back to herself in the cab to realize, on the evidence of the narrow mirrors inset beside the doors, that she was (as Mrs. Trowbridge would have put it) a sight for all beholders, with her strained white face and dazed, set eyes . . .

But the look and attitude of Harry and Inez had been etched indelibly upon the tablets of her memory by acid fear.

She could see now, as clearly as she had then, the blazing hatred in the black eyes of Inez, the supercilious and derisive malevolence in Harry's.

As definitely she retained the details of their appearance; which was something vastly different in the case of both from the time of Leonora's knowledge of them.

The Nut, for one, had won his nickname as much for his weakness for flashy if expensive clothing as for the silly-ass manner which he commonly affected, finding it useful in his business. But today he was well, if perhaps too much, dressed. A black morning coat with striped gray trousers, white linen waistcoast and spats, radiant topper and varnished shoes, makes a perfectly correct costume for afternoon on the Avenue. For all that, on a day of summer heat it is undeniably conspicuous.

In the case of Inez the transformation had proved even more startling. The Inez whom Priscilla had seen with the eyes of Leonora was prone to shoddy finery and strident color schemes, and displayed lofty contempt for trifles, such as buttons missing or hanging by a thread, grease stains, shoes down at the heels, skirts that cleared the ground at the same elevation fore and aft. Whereas today she was trimly turned out in the smartest of tailleurs, with a hat the last cry in popular impudence, and gloved and shod as well in a way that none could criticize.

Clearly the Nut had prospered since that night at Ristori's. As clearly the inconstant Inez, following the arrest of Leo the Blood, had been swift to forsake a sinking ship for passage on a more seaworthy craft with every promise of a prosperous voyage.

But (Priscilla argued firmly with herself) what of that? What was it to her whether Inez and Harry fared well or ill?

After all, why in the name of reason need she have been so easy a prey to consternation on unexpectedly coming face to face with the pair?

True, she had met and recognized at sight, and had been recognized as Leonora by those two creatures whom Leonora had most to dread; the envious and spiteful baggage who had always hated her; the man she had feared, loathed, and denounced to his face as a stool pigeon, a tool of the police, a common criminal countenanced by the authorities because of his value as an informer; who consequently might be counted on to stop at nothing to compass his revenge upon Leonora, to punish and to silence her.

But why need that so affect Priscilla? She was not Leonora; so what had she to fear?

What tho Inez and Harry had mistaken her for Leonora? She was not, she was merely one who resembled Leonora strangely and still more strangely was sib to her in spiritual affinity. A woman of another world entirely, occupying an established position in an ordered and solid state of society, she was secure against any offense which wrong-headed malice might offer her.

Suppose they did believe her to be Leonora; their first essay at acting on that belief would inevitably be set at naught by the discovery that they were in error.

She had nothing, positively nothing, to fear from them.

And yet—she was afraid, fear crawled in the back of her mind, outside the bright arena of common sense, like a snake in a shadowy thicket. . . .

She pondered the riddle for a long time before it was revealed to her that her fear was not for herself but for Leonora.

Whatever that secret tie which linked their natures, it was so strong, so close, that she could not contemplate anything that threatened Leonora, however vaguely or remotely, without experiencing a distress so deep and true that it was hardly to be dissociated from an emotion purely selfish.

Imagination called up again those faces that had glared at her in the crowd, two masks of evil lighted from within by a hatred deadly and implacable.

As long as those two remained at large, Priscilla knew, so long would the happiness, if not the life, of Leonora be in jeopardy.

She tried to think of something she could do to confound them, frustrate them, reduce them to impotence.

But she knew so little, her life had been too well sheltered, she could not imagine how to deal with creatures of their sort—recourse to the police being out of the question since it must necessarily involve Leonora.

A chiming clock reminded her that it was half after 4, while at 5 she was to take tea with some friends who were leaving town the next day. With every wish and reason to disappoint them, she bestirred herself and made ready to go. It would never do to let herself be crowded and overcome by minor alarms. There was in her mind foreboding of greater trials to come.

CHAPTER XXXIII.
MR. CHILVERS.

WITH what she later chose to think unpardonable stupidity, she perceived, utterly without misgivings, that a maid was answering a ring at the front door; and she paused on the lower landing, a few steps above the entrance hall, fumbling with a stubborn glove button, waiting for whoever it was to state his business and get out of the way.

In some surprise she saw the maid approach the foot of the stairs with a silver tray on which lay a card.

Discovering her on the landing, the maid paused, looking up.

"A gentleman to see you, Miss."

Wondering, still unsuspecting, Priscilla went on down.

A man standing near the front door, contentedly inspecting his image in a mirror, straightened up with a well-feigned start and came quickly toward her.

"Miss Maine!" he exclaimed in a rather high voice, clipping his words after a fashion which he believed to be English—and carrying it off fairly well—"I say, what rippin' luck! Fancy findin' you in!"

Completely nonplussed, she stared blankly into his eyes, ignoring the chamois-gloved hand he proffered.

"You don't remember me?" He uttered a little giggle. "Why, of course you do! Harry Chilvers—met you at the Lathom's a few weeks ago." He slapped his leg lightly with a stick which he carried with his topper in his left hand, and giggled again with an accent of triumph. "Now you remember—don't you? Saw you on the Avenue this afternoon, and thought I'd call on the off-chance of findin' you in. Merely passin' thru town, got in yesterday, off to Newport tomorrow, you know. . . Awf'ly jolly to see you, really."

She was able to say coolly: "How do you do?"—and with a nod aside dismissing the maid, turned toward the door of the drawing-room. "Won't you come in?"

"Charmed?"

The soi-distant Mr. Chilvers ambled amiably into that place of morbid hospitality, with its drawn shades and its furniture that sulked under dust-cloths with an air of bitterly resenting any intrusion upon their privacy.

Priscilla halted in the middle of the room, a table at her back. She commanded a view of the entrance hall; the maid had disappeared—she devoutly hoped was out of earshot.

"What can I do for you?" she asked quietly, looking down at the card to refresh her memory—"Mr. Chilvers?"

Tall, slender, carrying the art of his tailor admirably, the man paused before her in an attitude of raffish ease. With an ironic smirk, he jerked his head toward the doorway.

"Safe to talk here?"

"I cannot imagine," Priscilla uttered slowly, "why it should not be." She met his stare steadily, calmly. "Unfortunately, I do not remember you, Mr. Chilvers. Nor am I acquainted with the Lathoms. I have an engagement for 5 o'clock . . ."

"Really?" Mr. Chilvers drawled. "Couldn't put it off, I presume—now could you?"

She lifted a wrist to consult her watch. "If you have anything to say to me, I can give you two minutes."

With unblushing effrontery Mr. Chilvers closed in, caught hold of her wrist and bent his head over the watch, an exceedingly handsome affair in platinum and small diamonds.

"Pretty thing," he approved with a

nod, letting her wrist fall. "Where you catch him, Nora?"

She showed him a face like marble, cold, hard, expressionless. But inwardly resentment burned so hotly that fear of any sort was utterly consumed.

"My name is not Nora——"

"So I understand." Mr. Chilvers carefully deposited his hat, crown down, upon the table, clipped his stick under his arm, and with a flourish whipped out a flat gold cigarette case. He repeated slowly in a voice of deep amusement: "So—I—under—stand. Mind me smokin'?"

"I'd rather you didn't. I haven't time——"

"Oh, but I have—I've got all the time there is." He tucked his cigarette between his lips and lighted it, glancing appreciatively around the room. "Jolly little nest you've feathered for yourself, Nora. Pardon; Miss Priscilla Maine—anythin' you like. I don't mind what name you call yourself by, so long as you humor my whim for Chilvers. Rather fond of Chilvers, you know. Don't remember ever wearin' an alias I took such a fancy to."

"I don't understand you. Won't you be kind enough to go?"

"Presently, me dear—all in good time." The Nut unceremoniously whisked away a dust-cloth and sat down in the chair it had hidden. "I've got to hand it to you, Nora—Priscilla, I mean," he observed with a look of admiration; for the moment forgetting to be British. "You sure do get away with the grande dame stuff to the Queen's taste. Not to mention this house, and that limousine at the door . . . I take it, that's yours, too? Mind tellin' me how you do it, and how long you've been doin' it? Just between ourselves, both members of this club . . ."

"Evidently," said Priscilla, "you are mistaken about me, Mr. Chilvers. I don't know you, and have no wish to." She moved a step toward the door. "Good afternoon."

MR. CHILVERS did not budge, but wagged a reproachful head.

"I say, Nora, don't be so up-stage. What's the use? I understand perfectly how annoyin' it is and everythin'; but you know, the game's up—it is as far as Inez and I are concerned, at any rate—so you might as well accept the situation gracefully, come down to earth and be sweetly reasonable."

"I tell you," Priscilla began, "I am not the person you——"

But Mr. Chilvers, talking steadily, cheerfully, and with persistence, talked her down.

"There's no sense your bein' afraid of my blowin' on you, or Inez, either, you know, Nora. That wouldn't be pally, would it? Wouldn't be business, either. We admire your work, we admire it no end, so much so that we're all in a sweat to know how you do it, and get in on the graft ourselves. With all the coin that this lay-out stands for, surely you can spare a little for old friends who are just makin' a fresh start in life. . . . I've taken little Inez on as an apprentice, you know. We're workin' the hotels. She's a sweet child when you get to know her, and so bright, you've no idea, far too bright to be wasted on the life she was leadin' before that little show of ours downtown busted up. Still, I must admit she hasn't got your brains, and she's a bit amateurish as yet. She shows promise of class when I've broken her in, but that's goin' to take time, and meanwhile the pickin's ain't as easy as you might think. So we're terrible glad to find you so well fixed and anxious to lend us a helpin' hand."

"Please!" Priscilla insisted. "I don't understand you in the least. I must ask you to excuse me——"

"Ah, cut it!" An ugly light glimmered in the ratlike eyes. "Chuck it, Nora. Don't tempt me to pull any rough stuff; it ain't the little thing I do best, somehow I haven't got the polish you might expect. But I've got you where I want you and you're goin' to come thru like a dear girl or I'll . . ."

He paused, his cruel smile playing around thin, hard lips: "How would you like me to tip off Red Carnehan where to look for you?"

"You can't!" the girl protested wildly. "He's dead——"

"Really?" Mr. Chilvers puffed contentedly on his cigarette. "Sure about that?"

A baffling twinkle in his look, coupled with the innuendo, annoyed and confused her. "What do you mean?" she demanded, instinctively lowering her voice and taking a step toward him.

"Nothin'. I'm merely inquiring'; are you sure Red's dead?"

"It was in the papers——"

"Oh, I know Leo identified a body as Red's. But nobody's proved to me that Leo didn't tell an awful naughty fib for the sake of a friend."

"You mean—you think—Red's alive?"

"Well, if I were you, my dear, I wouldn't take any chances except on a sure thing. You'd be frightfully cut up—if I may use the expression—if Red turned up one of these fine days, alive and kickin' and lookin' for his girl."

She gave an uncontrollable gesture of dismay, which Mr. Chilvers noted with a grin.

"Sort of gives one to think—doesn't it, Nora? And, anyway, I guess this crabs the mistaken identity stall for good. You won't try to sling that bunk again with your dear old side-kick, Harry the Nut, will you?"

She gasped and was silent, discountenanced, appreciating how hopelessly she stood committed.

Impossible now to deny to this man that she was Leonora . . .

Of a sudden she felt herself uplifted by a vast sense of relief. In a twinkling doubts and fears and indecision were all swept away; all that misery of uncertainty, heartache and dread which had been her portion for many days abolished by the magic wand of a settled purpose which had been, as it were, thrust into her hand. Now she had something to do, something to live for, something to fill the emptiness that love denied had made in her life.

Now she desired no longer to undeceive the man who sat leering in mean exultation over her discomfiture. Let him continue to believe that she was Leonora, and make what profit he could of that belief. If she could not have that happiness of which Leonora unwittingly had despoiled her, she could at least protect Leonora's happiness and conserve it by taking upon herself the punishment. Leonora otherwise must suffer at the hands of her forsaken associates, by way of penalty for her defection.

Exalted by a sublime spirit of self-sacrifice, she faced Mr. Chilvers with a decision and confidence that would have made him uneasy had he been less infatuate in the triumph of his low cunning.

As it was, not till long after he had left did he recall that look, try without avail to fathom it, and become suspicious.

The slamming of the outer vestibule door disturbed them. Priscilla turned hastily to peer out into the hall. On the filet lace that covered the glass of the front door the vague silhouette of Mrs. Trowbridge showed. She was unconsciously affording Priscilla a few moments of grace by fumbling for her keys.

"Please!" An imperative gesture brought Mr. Chilvers to his feet, somewhat to his own surprise. "You must go now—or you'll spoil everything."

"Papa comin'?" he inquired with a knowing look.

"My aunt. I daren't present you to her. You must go."

"Well—but how about our next little chat?"

"Anywhere you say, any time——"

"I say the Plaza. Four o'clock tomorrow afternoon. We'll have tea. Mind my dragging Inez along?"

"No—surely not. But don't delay now."

Mrs. Trowbridge's key grated in the lock. Mr. Chilvers deftly flicked the stub of his cigarette into the empty fireplace, took up his hat and stick, and moved gracefully out into the hall.

"Remember: The Plaza at 4. And don't stand me up—not unless you're lookin' for real trouble."

"I'll be there." The front door swung open, admitting Mrs. Trowbridge. Priscilla gave the criminal her hand. "Then good afternoon, Mr. Chilvers—and thank you for calling. I'm so sorry I have to rush off to keep my appointment."

"Don't mention it. Charmed to have had the pleasure of seein' you, even for a moment."

Mr. Chilvers bowed with empressement and glided sleekly away, with a second bow acknowledging the frozen presence of Mrs. Trowbridge.

The door closed behind him. Aunt Esther bore down on Priscilla with supercilious brows.

"My dear child! Who was that strange creature?"

"That?" Priscilla laughed with a note of hysteria. "Oh, nobody of any consequence—just an acquaintance—an artist of a sort."

"An artist? I thought as much!" The good woman sighed. "I did hope you wouldn't bring such people to the house, but I presume . . ."

The nose of defied convention sniffed suspiciously an atmosphere that was no doubt somewhat tainted by an unholy presence.

Priscilla laughed, and for the first time in days with a genuine ring of mirth.

"Don't worry, dear," she offered vaguely; and added with more decision: "By the way, I've been thinking it's selfish of me to keep you in town in this heat. Besides, Ada Moyer won't pose again till some time next autumn. We might as well go down to Southampton as soon as you can manage. . . ."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE THREAT OF THE WILD.

IN THE morning she dreamed once more of Leonora . . .

But now the way of the dream with her was something new; perhaps in that it was more in true sense a dream, less an involuntary essay in telaesthesia. For all that, it had its element of clairvoyance, as the outcome was to prove.

Now, however, and for the first and only time Priscilla seemed to figure solely in the role of an observer, physically uninvolved, spiritually independent; merely one who stood apart a little, looking on; as one may view the traffic on a stage, understanding the passions which rule the players without any sense of personal implication in their web. . . .

What instinct had foreshadowed in the dream proved true: The scene was in a theater of the hills, set high upon a wooded mountain flank, overlooking a deep wide valley, the soft green velvet of whose forest carpeting was threaded by slender silver streams and dotted with little shining lakes.

The day was young. Long shadows rested upon the drenched grass of a clearing hedged about by the columns of a forest dark and close and still.

Sunlight, flashing level across the eastern ridges, struck squarely a log bungalow set in the clearing, a rambling structure that hugged the earth, awnings to shield windows whose shadowy depths were framed in draperies of gay chintz; a spacious veranda whose floor was as neatly joined as a ship's deck, furnished with wicker rest chairs and tables; beds of old-fashioned flowers, a flaming border for the edges of the veranda; a graveled walk that led thru a breadth of well-groomed lawn to the mountain road; at the back of the bungalow and somewhat to one side, a log garage with a concrete floor, its wide doors disclosing an expensive motor car; a lodge of ease in that vast wilderness . . .

On the veranda, near the steps, Leonora stood waiting, looking back into the living-room.

The girl was brilliant with a beauty new in Priscilla's knowledge of her, every shade of care and discontent disestablished from her countenance, its clear pallor enriched by a new-found glow of well-being. In her eyes peace had taken up its abode.

Dressed in a brief skirt of tan twilling and blouse of white silk simply fashioned, with high-laced boots sturdy enough for woods-walking, hatless, her hair dressed low upon her neck, she held herself with a confidence unrelated to her one-time arrogance. Of that truculent swagger which had been so becoming in the Street of Strange Faces today no trace survived. Here was a woman so utterly made new that the history of her beginnings seemed completely destroyed.

So much, in those few days, love had done for Leonora . . .

The clear radiance of her eyes was clouded only when, restless with waiting, she turned for a moment to look out over the valley that swept below.

Then her face sobered for an instant, she had almost a look of fear. . . .

It was swiftly dissipated by a sound of footsteps. Mario came out of the bungalow.

Clothed far more formally than she, in a costume better suited to city streets, he carried a small, locked attache case, chamois gloves, a hat. Evidently he was bound upon a journey. As evidently Leonora was not to go with him.

Silently they embraced. . . .

Piloted by a Japanese boy in a white jacket, the motor car rolled out of the garage and to one side of the veranda, where it stopped. The Japanese jumped down and, leaving the door open, effaced himself. Mario and Leonora, he with an arm round her waist, moved across the lawn to the car, into which he tossed his attache case, lingering for a last caress.

She clung to him as if she could never bring herself to let him go. Touched, responsive, he made but the gentlest efforts to disengage. At length, however, he had to remind her:

"Dear, if I am to catch my train at Kingston, I must go."

She trembled a little, held him closer for an instant, then quickly released him and stood aside, averting her eyes.

"It's so hard," she said with a quivering mouth. "How do I know I'll ever get you back?"

"But it's only for the day. I'll be home before dinner time."

"I know, but . . ."

He consulted his watch. "There's a later train we can catch if you will hurry and change——"

"No!" She lifted her eyes with a forced smile of adorable bravado. "I won't be silly! It's only because it's the first time . . . I've got to learn to do without you for a while now and then; I might as well begin now—I must, I will!" She stamped a foot to assert her determination, and laughed a little rueful laugh. "Now go—kiss me once, just once more—and go!"

They kissed . . .

"You're sure, Leonora?"

She swallowed a sob and nodded bravely: "Sure!"

"You're not afraid——?"

"What of? There's nothing but these woods, and I'm only scared of them—a little—because I never saw anything like them before in all my life. I'll get over that—I've got to get over a lot of foolishness—just give me time . . . Now I won't have you miss that train! . . ."

She ran down to the road to watch the car till a turning took it out of sight.

She stood listening till the hum of its motor was blotted out by the abiding stillness.

For the day was very still, being windless. From the chimney of the kitchen at the back of the bungalow a shaft of fine blue vapor ascended almost without a tremor. In the weight of the sun's rays there was the threat of a day of heat, which Nature seemed to have resigned itself to suffer without complaint.

Now she could hear nothing but the far cawing of a community of crows, a sound infinitely desolate.

Then even that ceased, her straining ears were disconcerted by the silence of the forest.

She did not understand. Such silence frightened her. It surged in wave on

She Ran Down the Road to Watch the Car Till a Turning Took It Out of Sight.

wave upon her senses, like a sea seeking to stun and engulf them, to obliterate them altogether.

She cast hunted glances roundabout. And of a sudden she could no more endure her isolation there in the sunlit open, and she turned and fled wildly to the friendly closeness of the house.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TRANCE.

LIKE a claptrap illusion of the moving-picture, the shadows of her dream dissolved into the substance of her waking life. But that terror which had clutched at the heart of Leonora in the wholesome freedom of the hills lived on in the heart of Priscilla, coming awake in the inviolable and confined security of her bedchamber.

It lay upon her soul like a cloud of darkness that no will of hers might lift. She appealed in vain to reason, to common sense. The inarticulate menace of the woods that had been so eloquent to the senses of Leonora continued to oppress Priscilla with a premonition of predestined evil.

She rose, bathed, dressed, breakfasted, all mechanically; greeted her aunt, listened to her animated exposition of plans for getting out of town on the second day following, responded, answered questions, all in a sort of daze; her abstraction becoming so marked that it at length registered even upon the perceptions of Mrs. Trowbridge.

"It's a good thing Ada Moyer came to her senses when she did," that lady observed with tart satisfaction. "The heat's affecting your head already."

Priscilla had not sufficient spirit to frame a rejoinder.

Prepossessed with that feeling of impending disaster weighed more and more heavily upon her mind as the day aged. More and more strongly she felt herself incapable of coping with the routine duties of its course. She went to and from like an automaton, aware of one thing; that danger of some sort threatened Leonora, that she was powerless to avert it—who could not even name it.

What otherwise had held place of first importance in her consideration, her encounter with Harry Chilvers of the day before and her appointment to meet him at the Plaza today for tea, was displaced, relegated to a status of least consequence, then forgotten altogether.

At 4 o'clock, instead, she was pacing up and down the waiting-room of Dr. Philip Fosdick, digging nails into her palms and teeth into her underlip in the endeavor to keep from giving away to hysteria.

In his sympathy, in the wisdom of his counsel that had never failed her, Priscilla thought to find at least temporary comfort, if not her sole hope of salvaging her reason. The tension of nameless dread was becoming more than she knew how to bear unaided.

She sought Fosdick on impulse, suddenly, abandoning every other interest. The voice that answered her telephone call said that Dr. Fosdick was "out on calls" but would be back at 4. Priscilla arrived at his office at half past 3. With a punctuality almost unexampled for him, Fosdick strolled in at twenty minutes to 5, to find his waiting-room tenanted by a semi-distracted woman, hagridden by fears she could by no means formulate in words, and so nerve-racked that she was unable to control voice or gesture.

One glance at her face of suffering, one look into those eyes of pitiful appeal—Fosdick drew her into his consultation-room. There she collapsed utterly, going with childlike trust into his arms, hiding her face in his shoulder, shaken by that tempest of emotion against which her last slight guard had been beaten down upon his arrival.

He let her rest so, holding her lightly, gently patting her hands, murmuring words of reassurance, till the first and fiercest transports spent themselves, then set himself to rebuild her self-control with every resource at his command.

It was slow work. Not till she was seated, holding his hand with one that clung desperately, her other hand engaged in dabbing her eyes with a wet wisp of linen and lace, did he venture to question her.

It was soothing to be able to talk without reserve. At the same time the sense of terror was ever with her, like a spectral presence lurking just behind her shoulder, defeating with inexorable persistence every effort to consign it to forgetfulness. She told her story eagerly, but in fragments only; she was powerless long to follow any one train of thought because, invariably, when she seemed on the very verge of losing herself in the interest of narration, a chill breath of fear would numb her confidence, her eyes would film with daze, her voice break in the middle of a sentence, her relaxing grasp on Fosdick's hand tighten convulsively, her thoughts falter into momentary incoherence.

Again and again he needed to exert himself to the utmost in order to restore the mean balance of her self-command. Only the tenderness of solicitude of the lover allied with the knowledge,

(Continued on Page 16.)

Another "Pete Paggley" Story

OUT OF COURT

By Artemus Calloway

"MISTAH WATSON, if'n I needed anything any wuss dan I needs a dollah, I wouldn't need nothin'."

Watson gazed at the old man who stood before him, his old hat in his hand, big drops of perspiration showing on his shiny head, which was entirely bald except for a little fringe of gray at the back. The white man laughed.

"You are the biggest old liar and fraud in the world, Pete. Here's your dollar."

Pete bowed low. "Thanky, suh! You sho' does understan' niggahs, Mistah Watson."

"I think I understand you pretty well." And George Watson laughed again.

"When did you git in fum de mine, boss?"

"Yesterday afternoon. I'm going away on the Coppename tomorrow morning."

"To New 'Leans?"

"Yes."

"Sho' now! Ain't dat fine? When you think you's comin' back?"

"Can't tell. As soon as I can."

"Pete, your shoes are looking pretty bad. I have a pair in my room at the San Carlos that I'll give you if you'll come up there in about two hours. I'm not going back there right now."

"How much is de time now, boss?"

"Ten-twenty."

"In puhzactly ten minutes less'n two hours I'll be dah. I don' wanna trus' to no mistakes."

"Very good."

As Watson walked away Pete muttered, "Ain' I glad I didn't hab on dem shoes Mistah Harrell done gib me de yuther week jes' befo' he went down de coas' to see 'bout dat timber?"

The old negro stood watching Watson for a few moments, and then shuffled along in the direction he had taken. He had covered only a short distance of half a block when he saw coming toward him a young fellow, apparently about 20 years old. Pete's face brightened.

"Mawn'n, Boss," he said.

"Good morning."

"Boss, kin you wait jes' a minute?"

"Yes, I suppose so," and Jim Carter stopped.

"Boss, if dah evah was a old niggah in de middle of a bad fix ol' Slavery Time Pete is got him beat fo' ways fum Sunday."

"Bad fix?"

"Yassuh! Bad fix is right. Twenty yeahs ago I come down heah to Honduras. Been right heah evah since. Been heah in Tela since even when dey wo'nt no Tela. Gittin' ol' now, an' can't work. Can't git nothin' to do, if I could work. Got no money, no frien's, no nothin' scusin' 'bout a bushel o' trouble. Been wantin' to git back to Old Tennessee, but don' suppose I'll evah do it. If I could git up de deck passage to New 'Leans, I think I could find some o' my ol' white folks dah, an' git de money fum dem to go on to Tennessee, but I know I'll nevah do dat. No suh! Can't even git nothin' to eat, let alone a ticket to New 'Leans."

"You are from Tennessee?"

"Yassah, sho' is. Right up dah 'bout leben miles fum Nashville I was bawn en raised."

"You are from near Nashville, Tenn?"

"Nashville, Tennessee, is puhzactly correct. Knows all de bes' white folks aroun' dat part o' de country. Yassuh, dat's uh fac'."

"I'm from Nashville."

"Dah now! Who'd uh thought it? Bless yo' heart, chile. Whut you doin' way off down heah? Whut is yo' name?"

"Carter."

"Yo Pa didn't been Mistah John Carter dat use to live down dah 'bout fo'teen miles below Nashville? Don' tell me dat, boy; don' tell me dat!"

"My father's name is John, and he once lived a few miles south of Nashville."

"Lawdy! Lawdy! Think o' dat! Boy I knowed yo' daddy when he wo'nt no mo high den dat! My! My! I jes' bet yo Pa wouldn't let ol' Pete suffer if he knowed it. No, dat he wouldn't!

"Well, I'll declare! This is rather unusual. I didn't expect to find an old Tennessee darkey down here. I've only been here five days. I'm working for the United States Fruit Company. Here is $2, all I have with me. Come around to see me some time. I live in the bachelor's quarters. You'll know how to find me. Possibly I can help you some more."

"Thanky, suh, thanky! Good-by. I'll come to see you, don' make no misunderstandin' 'bout dat!"

Pete stood quite still until Carter was out of sight. Then he dropped the money in his pocket, turned and walked quickly back in the direction from which he had come until he reached the nearest corner; then he turned down a side street, a broad grin covering his face as he neared a little building which had painted on its side, "Cantina."

A crowd of Honduraneans standing on the opposite side of the street were engaged in a heated argument, and Pete paused for a moment to listen to their opinions of each other. So engrossed did he become in what promised to terminate in a free-for-all fight that he was made aware of the approach of a well-dressed, pompous looking man, who had his eyes fastened intently on a letter, that he held in one hand, by being bumped into by him.

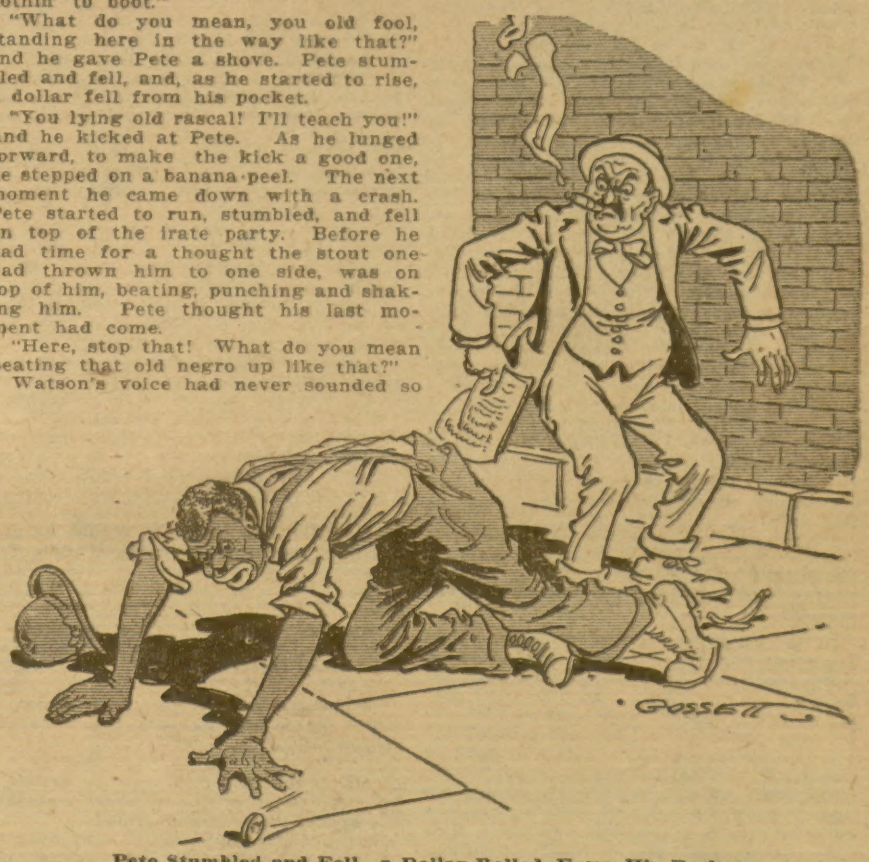
"'Scuse me, boss; 'Scuse me! Ol' Pete fum San 'Tone was jes' startin' aroun' to see you. I don' know what town yo's fum, but yo's fum de States en dat's recommend enough fo' Pete. Yassuh. An' I knows you'll hep a po' ol' niggah fum San 'Tone, Texas, whut's sick, ain' got narry singletary cent o' money, an' nothin' to boot."

"What do you mean, you old fool, standing here in the way like that?" and he gave Pete a shove. Pete stumbled and fell, and, as he started to rise, a dollar fell from his pocket.

"You lying old rascal! I'll teach you!" And he kicked at Pete. As he lunged forward, to make the kick a good one, he stepped on a banana-peel. The next moment he came down with a crash. Pete started to run, stumbled, and fell on top of the irate party. Before he had time for a thought the stout one had thrown him to one side, was on top of him, beating, punching and shaking him. Pete thought his last moment had come.

"Here, stop that! What do you mean beating that old negro up like that?"

Watson's voice had never sounded so



Pete Stumbled and Fell—a Dollar Rolled From His Pocket.

good to Pete before. It was the sweetest music he had ever heard.

"If you hit that old man another time I'll knock your head off!" The other released Pete.

"Why are you butting in on this, Watson? It's none of your affair."

"It is any real man's affair when he sees you beating this helpless old man up."

"He irritated me. I lost my temper. I suppose I was wrong. He had no business standing here in my way."

"I don't imagine he will any more."

"By the way, Watson, have you decided to accept my offer for your mine?"

"Don't talk foolishness, Barnes. You know I'd never accept an offer like yours."

"My offer is considerably more than you'll get out of it if you lose your concession."

"Haven't lost it yet. I don't care to talk about it, so drop the subject."

Barnes continued on his way.

"Did he hurt you, Pete?"

"Not much, Boss, but dat white man sho' did shake up mah disposition!"

"Must have been one of your friends from home."

Pete grinned.

"Dat's one time mah jedgment sho' was sprained."

"Come on with me and get those shoes."

WHEN the Coppename sailed next morning Watson was a passenger. Fifteen minutes after his arrival in New Orleans he was under arrest. One afternoon paper carried the following account of Watson's arrest:

PRESIDENT OF HONDURAS MINING COMPANY JAILED!

STOCKHOLDERS SAID TO HAVE CAUSED ARREST.

Less than a week ago George Watson, president of the Honduras Mining Company, was strolling 'neath the palms of Honduras; today he occupies a cell in the parish prison.

As the Coppename came alongside her dock at 11:15 this morning, a young man nattily attired in white ducks, a Panama resting jauntily on his head, stood lazily against the deck rail.

A few minutes later he strolled leisurely down the gang-plank. As his feet touched the dock two men approached. They had low but earnest speech together. The three entered a taxi; the destination of the taxi was the parish prison, and for a time Watson will have only the memory of the palms of Honduras, the walls of his cell suggesting nothing that could by the most vivid imagination be called tropical.

Watson is president of the Honduras Mining Company, and is said to be the majority stockholder of the concern. The company has offices in Jackson, Miss., Watson's home, and has offices also in this city. The Jackson offices, it is learned, attend to the financing, accounting and legal end of the company's affairs, while the New Orleans office handles the purchasing of machinery and supplies for the Honduras mine, as well as being established for the handling of shipments of the mine's output when there should be any. The only shipments so far seem to have been trouble.

It is charged that Watson and the manager of the New Orleans office have been defrauding the other stockholders. Jordon, the New Orleans manager, has disappeared. Watson refuses to talk for publication, altho practically admitted that he expected the company's attorney to reach New Orleans from Jackson, Miss., either tonight or early tomorrow morning.

In the meantime the palms will have to worry along somehow without Watson.

The next morning at 10 o'clock Houston, attorney for the Honduras Mining Company, was in Watson's cell.

"Now, George, I'm here not only as the company's lawyer, but as yours also, and further than that as your friend. First I want you to tell me anything that you wish attended to immediately and I'll see that it is done. Later we can talk over your plight, at which time we can exchange information."

"Houston, first I want you to go to our offices here, and find out everything you can in regard to the shape our business is in. Then come back here."

"I'll be back as soon as possible."

Two hours later Houston was back.

"To commence with, Watson, you of course know Jordon has disappeared. He disappeared the day before your ar-

rival. Dempsey, his assistant, says that he received a cablegram six days ago and seemed to be greatly excited. Dempsey doesn't know the nature of the message. I shall try to get a copy of it. From then until his disappearance, Jordon seems to have been under a great strain.

"Your company has an authorized capital stock of $500,000, with $100,000 paid in. You own 51 per cent; Craig, Morris and Johnson own the remainder, equally divided.

"No one, of course, has the right to sell any new stock in the company until it has been properly voted on and legalized, and even then, the stock would be sold by the Jackson office. It seems that Jordon has been selling some fake stock; just a little, and that was sold to some farmers in this and adjoining States. I don't think the sales amount to more than $1,000 at the outside, but that, of course, is enough to cause trouble. The money for these sales disappeared with Jordon. Your fellow stockholders have been advised of this in some roundabout manner, as well as having hints that other crooked deals were being pulled off. Craig and Morris are your friends; they trust you. Johnson wouldn't trust himself where his money is concerned. He, with some of those who purchased the fake stock, caused your arrest. This is all the information I can give you.

"Tell me just how everything stands in Honduras. Has that other concern about which you wrote me a short time back tried to cause you any trouble? There may not be any connection between that company and your present predicament, but somehow I feel that there is."

WATSON shook his head thoughtfully. "The concern you refer to is the Oropendulas Mining Company; its president is a fellow by the name of Barnes. He is down there now. They are, as the name implies, a mining company, the same as ours, tho much larger. Since Barnes arrived there I have had trouble with my labor, something that had not occurred before. Our mine is back from the coast some distance, but fortunately on the side of the mountain nearest the sea. Under our concession from the government, we have to have certain machinery erected within a given time; then we have a longer time in which to get in full operation. In order to rush the work at the mine I have not as yet commenced the work on the railroad that I planned to build from a certain point on another line down there, that is already in operation, to the mine, but have been shipping the machinery out over this other line to the point in question, and from there, transporting the smaller parts by pack train. The larger and heavier parts I have been hauling on a strong wagon, having made a fairly good road for this purpose.

"I had an option on a piece of land that I needed for the railroad right-of-way. Very foolishly I had not placed this option on record. Just before I wrote you about the trouble I was having, this option disappeared, and the old crook from whom I had secured it, sold the land to the Oropendulas Mining Company. He denies the existence of such an option, and I have no way of proving to the contrary.

"Then Barnes came to me and offered me an absurdly low price for our holdings—ten thousand dollars. I thought they had me then, and not only got busy myself, but got our local attorney, named Mendoza, who, by the way, is a pretty bright fellow, to work, and found where we could get another right-of-way that they had overlooked, and altho the distance will be greater, it is feasible to build the line that way. Failing to get me that way, they started with my labor again. Then we commenced having accidents. Work nearing completion would in some mysterious manner be destroyed, and things like that until I was on the verge of insanity. Then, the last machinery was due. That is, the last to complete that part of the work which was to be ready to make the concession safe. The steamer arrived from the States. I was on hand. No machinery. I immediately cabled and learned that it had been held up at the factory on account of a breakdown, had finally been shipped, but had not reached New Orleans. I then came here to see if I could do anything to hurry it forward.

"We have but a short time. There is a boat sailing from here on the 10th of this month, five days from now; the machinery should go by not later than that time; the latest time by which it could leave here and get there is on the steamer sailing the 17th. That would put it in Tela on the 21st; it would take one day to get it thru the customs, one day to get it over the railroad to the pack-trains and wagon, two days from there to the mine. By working day and night we could get it erected and in operation in six days. That would make it the 21st. The first day of next month, if what I have outlined isn't a reality, we lose the concession.

"Now I want you to get back to the office. Get Dempsey after the machinery, and have him come to see me after he has learned something, but not before. Next I want you to get me out of here. I suppose I can get bond."

"I'll work as fast as possible. Don't worry. Will see you again soon."

NEXT day Watson was released under bail.

The machinery was traced as far south as Louisville, Ky., and then all trace of it was lost. Watson kept the wires hot.

The 10th came and went. No machinery. On the 12th the shipment was reported in Kansas City, Mo. Came more telegraphing, and on the morning of the 16th, a notice was received from the freight office that the machinery was at last ready for delivery.

Watson went with the trucks for it. After a long wait he was informed that they had the billing on it, that it had been checked in, but had not as yet been located. He drove the employes of the freight department frantic; the freight house was ransacked. Late that afternoon a clerk reported that he had found it.

One look and the color left Watson's face.

The machinery was not what he had ordered, nor was it mining machinery!

Hurriedly he returned to the office. A few minutes after he reached there, a telegram came from the machinery house advising that thru error his machinery had been shipped to a lumber mill in the State of Washington. That it, too, had been delayed en route and had just arrived.

A hasty search thru the office files disclosed the fact that in placing the order Jordon had failed to have any delivery date shown. Houston said that from what he could gather they would have no claim against the machinery people, but would look into it further.

"Houston, can I leave here now?"

"You can. I didn't want to bother you before, but the charges against you have been withdrawn. Craig and Morris have succeeded in quieting Johnson. Jordon hadn't sold much fake stock, and that has been settled up. I got a copy of that cable he received, but it was in code, and could make nothing of it. I'm sure that he was paid by Barnes to sell this fake stock, and get the rumors out that caused your arrest, but doubt if we could prove it, unless we can get hold of Jordon, which seems doubtful. None of the detective agencies have been able to find any trace of him so far."

"Houston, I'm going to sail on the Suriname for Honduras tomorrow morning. Maybe it's not too late to do something."

"Can't you get accommodations?"

"I'm going if I have to sleep on deck."

"I'm going with you."

The next morning as Watson stood on the deck of the Suriname watching the muddy water of the Mississippi in its hurried flight to the Gulf, Houston handed him a morning paper, pointing out an item.

The item was to the effect that the Plant Machinery Company had been thrown into involuntary bankruptcy.

"That's the company you bought your machinery from, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Then we can forget any claim we might have had against them, for it's no good!"

ONE week after Watson's arrest in New Orleans, the papers containing the account of it reached Tela.

Pete was temporarily employed at John's place, a saloon owned and operated by a West Indian negro, but patronized solely by white men. That night he heard the affair discussed openly and freely by all the Americans gathered there. It was generally known that Watson had only a limited time in which to get certain machinery erected, and that he had gone to the States to hurry this machinery forward. Not one discussing the matter believed that Watson was guilty of any wrongdoing. More than one hinted at something crooked behind it, but all were united in the belief that Watson would lose his mine and all he had put in it.

The entrance of Barnes and a man that Pete had not seen before, brought an end to the discussion. None cared to dwell any further on the subject, and, in a short while, Barnes, his companion, and two or three others were the only ones in the saloon. Old Pete, gathering up empty bottles, cleaning off tables and performing other duties about the place, occasionally coming near Barnes' table, caught a few words of the conversation from time to time, and the more he overheard the more wrinkled his face became.

The next morning about 10 o'clock he asked John if he might leave the saloon for a few minutes. Half an hour later he returned. "Mistah John, I got to quit, and I got to quit right now. Please pay me."

"Ready to quite, are you, Pete? All right, I didn't think you'd work long. Here is your money," and John handed him three dollars.

"Thanky, thanky.

"Mistah John, I ain' lyin' to you dis time. I's up agin de wust thing I evah struck befo' in all mah life. Loan me some money. I ain' sayin' how much, jes' loan me all you will. Evy cent you kin or will."

"What?"

"You heerd me. I wants evy cent you'll let me have. An' dis time you'll git paid back. Dis is de mos' impawtant thing I's evah been up aginst. I got to hab money."

"I don't know what you are talking about. I guess you are crazy. Been thinking so for some time. Here is $2. I'll make you work it out some time."

"Thanky, suh, thanky."

TEN minutes later an office boy, a Jamaica negro, about 20 years old, was standing by Jim Carter's desk.

"Mister Carter, that hold Hamerican Pete his hawsking for you, sir. Shawl Hi tell 'im you cawn't see 'im?"

"No, I'll see him. Tell him to wait out there."

A minute later he was asking: "What can I do for you, Pete?"

"Yessuh, yessuh, thanky, suh. Mistah Carter, if I could see yo' daddy he'd hep me out. Dat he would! I needs money. I ain' comin' to you wid no skin game. No, siree! I wants evy cent you kin lemme hab. You'll git paid back in a few days. Lemme hab it, be it much or little, but fo' de Lawd's sake don' make it too little. I gotta hab money!"

"Really, Pete, I haven't much. I've been hearing funny things about you, and your ways of acquiring money. Perhaps——"

"Dis ain' no time fo' dat kind o' talk, white folks! Dis is de time fo' sho' 'nough! I jes' gotta hab money. You'll git dis back."

"But can't you explain why you've got to have money, and so much? From the way you talk you must require quite a sum. Maybe——"

"Maybe is daid, Boss. 'Heah's de money, Pete,' is the onliest kind o' talk dat's live enough to do me any good."

"Here is $5. All I've got. But if you are running in a swindle on me this time I'll skin you alive."

"Thanky! Dey ain' goin' to be no skinnin'. You'll git it back. Thanky, suh! Yessuh!"

Pete tried all the other employes of the office and raised $3 more.

"Twenty dollahs, countin' what I had to commence wid. Twenty dollahs, and no one else to go to. No! I mos' forgot! One mo' place."

Five minutes afterward Mrs. Clark heard some one rapping at the back door of the little cottage which she had entered as a bride a couple of months before. Upon arriving there she beheld Pete for the first time.

"Howdy do, Missus. Howdy, do! Sorry to disturb you, but I's ol' Slave'y Time Pete. Evybody 'roun heah knows me. Yassum. I'se been down heah in Honduras foh twenty yeahs, yassum, an' I's gittin' ol' now, an' wants to go back to old' Alabama. I lacks considable o' habin' 'nough, so I's jes' goin' aroun' 'mongst my white folks to see who'll gimme what."

"You are from Alabama?"

"Yassus. Fum right up close to Tuscaloosa. B'longed to de Williams', I did. When ol' Miss married her Pa gimme to her, an' says: 'Pete, you black rascal, you mus' always look out to see dat no hawm don' come to yo' missus,' an' I allus watched out, yassum, I sho' did."

"I have visited in Tuscaloosa. I know the Williams around there. They are nice people."

"Sho' 'nough quality folks! Yassum," and Pete brushed away a tear. "Sho is. If I kin only git back dah, I'll be all right. Yassum. I wants to git dat ol' Tuscaloosa clay on mah feet agin befo' I die."

"Wait a minute, I'll see what I have."

A FEW moments later, as Mrs. Clark stood gazing out across the Caribbean in what she imagined was the direction of her dear old Alabama, a tear glistening in her eye, old Pete was muttering to himself as he shuffled down the street. "Twenty-five dollahs now, an' not one else to go to. Whut kin I do?"

That night about 8 o'clock he entered John's place.

Barnes and his companion of the night before were there.

"Say, Pete," called out some one, "got all the money you need yet?"

"No, suh."

"Why don't you see Mr. Harrell; he's a good friend of yours."

"Suh?" Pete stammered.

"Won't Mr. Harrell let you have some money?"

"He ain' heah, Boss. No, suh, he ain' heah."

"Where is he?"

Old Pete looked worried. "He's down de coast somewhah, yassuh."

"He has some timber down there, hasn't he?"

"Yassuh," and Pete shuffled over to strike a newcomer for a loan.

"Pete, this is the third time you've tried to borrow money from me today, and I told you I didn't have it."

Pete heard some one say to Barnes: "Pete is a crack-a-jack camp cook, but he can seldom be gotten to work. You might hire him now, tho. He seems to be very hard up. Been trying to borrow money all day."

"I don't think he'd work for me. I'm sure he wouldn't."

Pete waited around for a while, and finally started for the door.

"Say, old man, come over here," Barnes said.

"Yassuh, yassuh, thanky, suh."

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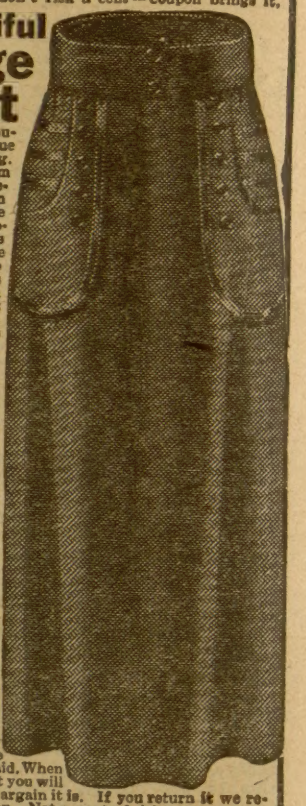

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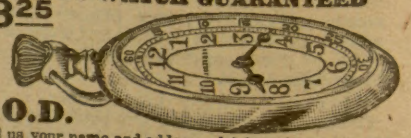

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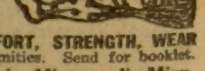

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"Do you want a job cooking for me at my mine?"

"Couldn't go out dah right now, suh. I's got some tickler bizness to 'tend to."

"I wouldn't want you for three weeks yet. Could you go then?"

"Don't know, suh. Maybe so."

"You want to borrow some money, don't you?"

"Yassuh, thanky, suh."

"How much do you want?"

"Seventy-five dollahs."

"You do want some money. Could you come and cook for me and work it out?"

"I don' know, suh. I'm not sho'."

"I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll let you have this money for three weeks. You give me a properly stamped paper, and that will be all right."

"Yassuh, I'll do dat."

"Very well. John, have you any government stamped paper?"

"Yes, sir. Here you are."

"All right. Now let us fix this up."

Within a few minutes the paper was drawn up, signed by Pete, properly witnessed, and Pete had his $75, and had left the saloon.

"You'll have a fat time getting your money out of Pete," laughed a young fellow.

"No, I won't. There is a law in this country that you can put a man in jail if he doesn't pay his debts. I have here evidence of Pete's indebtedness. When he fails to pay me, I'll give him his choice of accepting a job as cook and letting me deduct this money from his pay, or going to jail. I think he'll prefer the job."

FOUR days after the Suriname passed out of the Mississippi into the Gulf of Mexico, she drew up alongside the dock in Tela. As soon as the necessary formalities were gone thru, Watson and Houston hurried ashore and to the San Carlos.

Not one minute did either of them lose. Watson got busy wiring every one up and down the coast, trying to locate some machinery that might answer temporarily. At the end of two days he realized that it was impossible to secure what he wanted.

Houston got in touch with Mendoza and together they busied themselves, examining records, and looking up law, and by the time Watson's fruitless search for machinery was ended, Houston had completed his work.

That night when Watson had reported his failure to locate anything, Houston said, "Watson, I hate to say it, but you lose your concession if that machinery isn't there within a week. There's no way out of it."

"And no way to get the machinery there! I don't know what to do. If all the money invested in this mine belonged to me, I'd tell Barnes to go to the devil, but since there are others interested in it, I hate to lose even the $10,000 that I might save out of it for them. I think Barnes would yet pay me that much for our concession, the machinery we have on the ground, and the work we have done. The machinery alone is worth much more than that. If it goes to the government, it will cost him a great deal more than that to buy it from them, and he's not one to overlook any saving."

"Where is Barnes? I don't think I've seen him."

"He's been at his mine ever since we got here until late this afternoon. I understand he got in about dark."

"Forget it all for tonight. Try to get some sleep. Tomorrow morning we'll talk it over, and try to reach some decision as to what is the best thing for all concerned."

But neither of them was to have an uninterrupted night.

About midnight Watson was awakened by some one pounding on his door. It was Pete.

"What is it, Pete? I haven't seen you since I got back here. Was wondering what had beecome of you."

"Mistah Watson, I's jes' got back to Tela. Been away sev'al days. Mistah Harrell is wid me. We'se got important bizness to talk to you 'bout, and mus' talk to you tonight."

"Tell Mr. Harrell to come up here."

"How are you, Harrell? Glad to see you," Watson was saying a few minutes later.

"Glad to see you Watson. How's things?"

And then he continued: "Pete and I had a tough trip. I stopped at John's place to get refreshed. Saw two or three of the fellows there, and heard a little of your affair. Understand you brought your lawyer down from the States. Get him in here, and then I'll spin my yarn."

Five minutes later, Houston, Harrell and Watson were engaged in low, but earnest conversation.

NEXT morning, a few minutes before 11 o'clock, Watson received a message from Mendoza, and in a short while he, accompanied by Houston, Harrell and Pete, the latter shuffling along just behind them, walked into Mendoza's office.

"Buenos dias Cabilleros! Be seat. El otros weel be here muy pronto I theenk."

"I think they'll be here pretty quick myself," remarked Harrell.

He was correct. In five minutes Barnes and his lawyer, Sanchez, entered the room.

"Watson," said Barnes, "you know, of course, of the conference between our lawyers early this morning. You stung me all right."

"You are wrong. If any one 'stung' you as you term it, it was not me. A little later I may be able to enlighten you as to just who did. In the meantime, I want to get this business thru with."

"All right. Let's get it fixed up."

"Senor Mendoza has explained just what we want, to Senor Sanchez, and you of course understand it, but I have something else to say.

"The date on which I was to have sufficient machinery installed to secure my concession is the first of September. That is only one week off, and there is no possible way by which I can get the machinery there, much less get it set up and working. You have machinery at your mine, which is near ours, that you can get there, and in place by the time in question. I can sell to any one I want to and let them carry the contract thru with the government, provided, of course, I do it while the concession is yet mine.

"Very well. That property is easily worth $225,000. I could sell it for that if the machinery were in place, or if there was any way to get it in place within the required time. That being impossible, to the uninitiated it looks as if I'll have to lose it.

"I know, tho possibly I could not prove it, that you delayed my work there; that you caused the trouble with my labor, that you are responsible for the breakdowns. I know that Jordon was a tool of yours, and that it was thru your instigation that he sold the fake stock in our company and caused me the trouble I had in New Orleans. As I say, perhaps I could not prove all this, but it isn't necessary. No one can touch my property until the first. I want now $225,000 for it, and I want it placed to my credit in a New Orleans bank that I will name. I want it placed by cable, and I will have to be advised in the same manner that it has been so placed before I turn this property over to you. Mr. Houston can show you that I have the authority to close the matter up in this manner. He prepared for some final adjustment, when he saw how things stood with us, and while I was busy trying to locate the machinery.

"You are going to pay my price, and you know why, but I'll explain it to you again. Maybe your lawyer was so excited when Senor Mendoza got thru talking to him that he couldn't explain it to you very well.

"The reason you are going to do this is that you have recently acquired a mine some miles back from your first one. It is on the other side of the mountain; there is one narrow pass thru which a railroad can be built to the coast, and by no other route can it be reached. You overlooked this. Your lawyer told you that the pass was government land, and that he would get the right-of-way in plenty of time.

"It was not government land! It belongs to Harrell!

"Now for the part that is going to amuse you. You've got a big laugh coming in this, but I don't think you'll take it.

"Pete tried some weeks ago, just before Harrell went down the coast to look after some timber he is getting out down there, to borrow $2 from him. Harrell laughingly told Pete he was broke. Pete took this just as Harrell said it. To be broke, to Pete meant that he didn't have a cent. A man with seven or eight hundred dollars is to him immensely wealthy.

"ONE night Pete overheard you and another man talking over something about this last mine you acquired. He heard you discussing the railroad. And then the great idea struck him! You couldn't get to the mine from the coast except thru this pass I have mentioned. He remembered that the property belonged to Harrell, tho no one else seemed to. Harrell had told him he was broke. How then, thought Pete, could he have paid the taxes? Perhaps he had lost it! Next day he investigated. Sure enough, Harrell had not paid the taxes, and they were due in three days! Harrell had not failed to pay it because he hadn't the money, but because he had been so busy with the timber proposition that he had overlooked it. Pete hustled around and got up $25, which incidentally I am going to pay back for him. He lacked $75. You saw what you thought was a chance to get a good camp cook.

"You loaned him the money that kept you from stealing my mine!

"Pete paid the taxes, and got the receipt in Harrell's name, and then hustled down the coast, found Harrell and put him wise to your efforts to get my mine, and showed him how you could be beaten at your own game.

"Harrell wants $100,000 for his right-of-way.

"There is one more item, which you can charge to incidentals, or experience, as you see fit. This is a small amount, $85.

"If the prices I've named are too stiff for you, you don't have to pay them. You know better than any of us what it would mean to you to have no right-of-way from your mine to the coast. What do you say?"

"I'll pay it."

"All right. You cable your offices in the States to deposit the sums named to our respective credits. Have the banks cable us that it has been so deposited, and we'll execute the proper documents. The $85 I'll take in cash."

"All right. You've got me. I'll cable right away. Give me the names of your banks. Here is the $85, but I'd like to know what it is for."

"Seventy-five dollars is for Pete to pay back to you and take up the paper he gave you at the time he borrowed it."

"And the additional $10?"

Watson laughed. "That's to pay Pete for the licking you gave him."

* * *

A Gentle Hint.

AN ELDERLY examiner was putting a young medical student thru his tests.

"Supposing," he began, "there was a gunpowder explosion and a man was blown into the air. You, as the nearest doctor, being called in, what would you do?"

"Wait for him to come down again," was the prompt reply.

"Well, let us take another case. A man has dug a pit forty feet deep. At the top he slips and falls right to the bottom again. What would you advise?"

"Fill up the pit, and save funeral expenses!" answered the student glibly.

The examiner snorted angrily, and then barked:

"If I was to raise my foot and give you a kick, what muscles would be called into play?"

With a steely light in his eyes, the young man retorted:

"The flexible and extensive muscles of my right arm!"

* * *

Not Strong Enough.

MURIEL, 4 years old, was taken by her governess to have her tea with an aunt. Presently she began to eat a piece of very rich cake.

"Oh, I just love this chocolate cake," she exclaimed, "it's awfully nice."

"Muriel, dear," corrected her governess, "it's wrong to say you 'love' cake and I have frequently pointed out that 'just' is wrongly used in such a sentence. Again, 'awfully' is quite wrong. 'Very' would be more correct, dear. Now repeat your remark, please."

Muriel obediently repeated:

"I like chocolate cake; it is very good."

"That's better, dear," said the governess approvingly.

"But it sounds as if I was talking about bread," protested the little girl.

* * *

Of the Same Mind.

"THIS picture——" said Mr. Gawker.

"Was painted in a garret," replied the proud owner.

"Well! Well!"

"A thousand wouldn't buy it now."

"No," said Mr. Gawker, eying the masterpiece more closely. "And I'm one of the thousand."

SIMPLE MIXTURE MAKES HENS LAY

By W. S. Burgess.

Any poultry raiser can greatly increase his profits, easily and quickly by taking advantage of the 35 years' experience of a successful poultryman.

A life long study of egg production has resulted in a secret formula of buttermilk and other valuable ingredients that puts pep into lazy hens. Users report increases of two to seven times as many eggs.

This secret formula is now put up in tablet form and is called Combs' Buttermilk Compound Tablets. Simply feed in water or mix with feed.

I am so convinced that this wonderful formula is always successful that I say kill the hen that won't lay after using it.

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Dont Send a Penny

We want you to see this beautiful dress. So do not send a cent now—only the coupon—and the dress comes right to your home. We are so sure you will be amazed at this tremendous value that we are glad to send the dress subject to your approval. Not the slightest risk on your part—if you are not satisfied and delighted with its smart style or if you don't consider it a splendid bargain return it. No risk to you—Send today.

Very Latest Fashion

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Better than mere words, the picture shows you the smart lines and bewitching style of this pretty frock. Made of good quality navy blue serge in one piece gathered at waistline and encircled by beautifully embroidered belt. Waist part designed with panel front and vestee of contrasting material trimmed with dainty pearl buttons. Round collar handsomely trimmed with two-tone soutache braid. Sleeves finished with cuffs of tan cloth to match vestee. Skirt has large braid trimmed patch pockets. Colors, navy blue, green or black. Ladies' sizes, 34 to 46 bust measure; length, about 40 in. Misses' sizes, 32 to 38 bust measure; length about 38 in. The very latest and most fashionable model.

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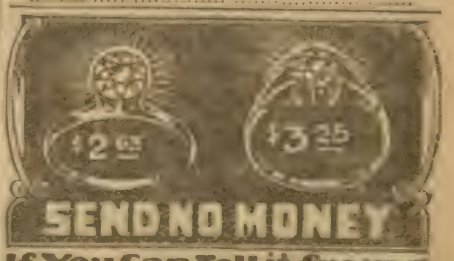
Name.....

Address.....



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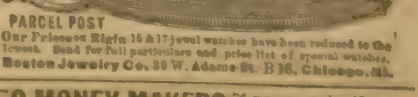

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A Matter of Exchange

By Paul Everman

A SQUAT green roadster snorted its way down Midwest's stringy main street and stopped directly in front of the Citizens' State Bank. An alert, brown-eyed young woman sprang out. She pointed a slender finger at the scowling, massive-framed English bulldog that lay sprawled in the seat of the machine.

"Stay there, Nap," she told him briskly.

Thru an excited, buzzing swarm of Midwest citizens that was massed thickly on the sidewalk she passed to the bank's entrance and tried the door. It was locked.

She rattled the latch determinedly, and from the wire-latticed inclosure within, the cashier, a slight, stooped, middle-aged man, came and peered out at her.

"Is Mr. Palmerton here?" asked the young woman pleasantly.

After a moment's hesitancy the cashier unlocked the door.

"Eh—eh—yes, yes." His voice, like the rest of him, seemed prematurely aged, but it had the mathematical exactness characteristic of most men of figures. "He's in the directors' room at the rear; back there. Just knock, and he'll let you in."

"Come in!" roared a pompous yet hearty voice. Benjamin Palmerton, president of the bank, whirled his chair till he faced the newcomer, and as he saw that she was propitiously pretty, his flatly-rolling pink face broadened in an expansive smile of welcome. "What can I do for you, ah—Miss Crile?"—glancing attentively at the card she handed him.

Barbara Crile smiled. "I am a detective."

"What?" A detective?" Palmerton's tone was frankly hostile.

Barbara sat down. "Mr. Woodward, the State bank examiner, sent me down from the capital to investigate last night's robbery."

"Oh; Woodward sent you. Well, of course, that's all right. Glad to have your help, I'm sure, Miss Crile. But there's nothing much to investigate. The robber was captured by our night marshal and is now in jail."

"Then the bank won't lost anything?" suggested Barbara.

"We-ll, yes. According to the estimate of Mr. Ansell, our cashier, the bank was robbed of about a thousand in cash and eighteen thousand in Liberty Bonds. In the burglar's bag we found the thousand intact; but the bonds were—ah—missing." Palmerton's cherubic eyes softened mournfully.

"Then the loss was eighteen thousand in Liberty Bonds?"

"Yes; eighteen thousand," said Palmerton with noble regret. "And of the eighteen thousand, two thousand dollars' worth were my own personal property.

But I can stand the loss—never complain—take life as it comes. What hurts me is that my boys may have to suffer."

"Your boys?"

"Yes—ah—my employes—the employes of the Midwest Plow Company, of which I am president. As I have said, I can stand my own loss bravely; but my boys, who owned the remaining sixteen thousand dollars' worth, cannot. They invested in these bonds as a personal sacrifice to help save our—ah—Nation. These bonds represent their savings for years. And now—gone—unless the bank can make up the deficit." Palmerton shook his baldish head in mighty sadness, and his sagging paunch quivered agitatedly.

Barbara nodded in sympathy. "Were the bonds registered?"

"No. More's the pity."

"What does the burglar say about the disappearance of the bonds?"

"He refuses to say a word. A most disagreeable sort of fellow! But this robbery, Miss Crile," he went on impressively, "would never have succeeded had my advice regarding the bank been taken. Did you notice the remains of the safe as you came in? Nothing but a flimsy, out-of-date, tin-box affair that any experienced man could have opened in ten minutes! Time and again I have recommended the installation of a modern, burglar-proof safe. But my advice, which should have carried weight, since I am president of this institution and since my factory has been the paramount feature in developing the town and raising its population to the three thousand mark, was politely listened to and then impolitely disregarded by the tight-fisted farmer directors of this bank. But now they see!"

A SHARP knock sounded at the door. At Palmerton's bluff invitation a wiry, one-armed fellow with tow-colored hair sidled awkwardly into the room.

"This is Mr. Morrow, our night marshal, Miss Crile," said Palmerton. "All right, Jake. What does the prisoner say by this time?"

"Nary a word!" declared Jake, swinging his stumpy arm in obvious excitement. "I can't get nothin' out o' him. And I've looked up and down the back alley a dozen times, but I can't find hide ner hair o' that package o' bonds."

"Just how did you capture the man, Mr. Morrow?" asked Barbara with an attentive smile.

Jake shot a questioning glance at the bank president.

"Don't be afraid to tell Miss Crile anything," declared the latter expansively. "She is in our—ah—confidence."

"It was like this, Miss," began Jake, fidgeting. "At 1 o'clock I tried both doors o' the bank, and there wasn't nothin' wrong. So I goes on down Main street to the plow works, like I always do. Then I come back down Main again. I switched off onto Elm street to try the door at Crossley's hardware, and I heard a noise. Purty soon I seed a masked feller dodge across the street, and I yells 'Halt!' And he halts and throws up his hands like I tell him to. Then I shoots off my gun into the air three times so's to wake people up. He's down at the jail now, but we can't find the bonds on him. That's about all they is to it."

"I think," said Barbara, getting up, "that I'd better go see this burglar person."

"By George, I'll go along with you myself," declared Palmerton magnanimously.

He bounced up, grabbed his hat, strode to the door and flung it open. Just outside stood Ansell, the cashier, palpably agitated.

Barbara looked at him narrowly. Had he been listening?

"I was just—getting ready to—to knock," he faltered to Palmerton. "I wanted to ask—about Pickens' note."

"Let that go for today, Harry," trumpeted the president. "We'll take that up tomorrow, after this robbery excitement blows over."

"We can go to the jail in my car," suggested Barbara, as they left the trembling cashier and stepped out into the street. "There is plenty of room."

Palmerton acquiesced with an ingratiating smile, Jake Morrow with an unintelligible grunt. They crowded into the machine, and with Nap sniffing uneasily at the feet of the two strange men, they sped to the edge of town and stopped gently in front of Midwest's modest jail, a squat brick structure with barred windows.

Jake unlocked the door and led the way down the narrow passage to the farthest of the two cells. Sitting dejectedly on the edge of his crude bunk, the prisoner, an unkempt, lank-jawed fellow, shot a sullen glance upward over a high-pointed shoulder.

"Well?" he growled.

Palmerton pranced to the bars and shook a fat fist at him. "You dirty thief!" he wheezed sternly. "What did you do with those bonds? We know you stole them. We have the goods on you. Come across, now. You took those bonds, bonds that belong to honest, hard-working men and women. Where are they?"

The prisoner rolled his tousled head and shrugged contemptuously. "Gwan, you big fat slob!" he jeered nastily.

"What—what——" sputtered the indignant president.

"Let me talk to him, Mr. Palmerton," soothed Barbara.

She surveyed the truculent prisoner narrowly and observed, "Hello, Shark Daggey——"

The burglar started, then relaxed with simulated indifference.

——alias Coffey, alias Berg," continued Barbara tranquilly.

"You're on the wrong track, lady!"—with lofty innocence.

Barbara smiled. "Never mind. I know who you are. Let's see: Wasn't it six years you were up at Michigan City? And——"

"Not me," interrupted the other stubbornly.

"—— how long were you at Joliet? Seven years, I believe. Oh, I know all about you, Daggey."

"My name's Clark."

"Yes, Clark and Daggey and Berg and Coffey. You see, I have your picture and record in my collection."

"A dick, eh?" he sneered.

"Never mind. You'll get at least ten years for this little job, because we've got the goods on you—all except the bonds. Come on; tell us what you did with them."

He shook his head.

"No? Very well. But remember this: The more you tell, the easier you'll get off. You ought to know that from experience."

The prisoner stared at the wall long and thoughtfully. At last he got up and shuffled to the bars with a shrug of resignation.

"Aw, what's the use!" he grunted. "You've got me. I might as well give you the low-down on the whole works."

HE GROPED for a beginning, and then plunged on:

"I cracked the safe. Sure. It was a pipe. Took me 'bout ten minutes. I finds some chicken feed and a bundle marked 'Liberty Bonds.' See? Well, I puts the cash in my grip and the bundle o' bonds under my wing and starts out for a getaway.

"When I was half way down the alley a guy jumps out from behind a barrel and holds me up. He takes the bundle o' bonds and beats it."

Palmerton interrupted him with a harsh, incredulous laugh and turned to Barbara. "There's no use of listening to this fellow, Miss Crile. He's handing us out a fairy tale."

"You're a liar!" bristled Daggey.

"Hold on," interjected Barbara. "Describe the fellow who held you up, Daggey."

"He was a kinda short guy, and he had a long coat wit' the collar turned up. He was kinda slick and easy movin', like a cat."

"Was he masked?"

"Yeh; han'kerchief. And he had his hat pulled down over his eyes. That's about all I can tell you. I couldn't see very good. It was darker'n hell."

"What happened after you were held up?"

"I sneaks on down the alley. And when I started to cross the street, this rube flattie pulls me in. Pinched by a rube flatttie!" The burglar's tone was aggrieved.

Barbara laughed. "Yes, you ought to be ashamed of yourself, Daggey." Then, to Palmerton, "Are you ready to go now?"

"Certainly," Palmerton declared, casting a browbeating glance in the direction of the prisoner. "This fellow's cooked-up tale is all piffle and nonsense!"

So they left the prisoner in Jake Mor-

row's care, climbed into Barbara's roadster, shot down the street to the bank and walked past the gray-faced cashier to the directors' room, where, with rare ingenuity, Palmerton proceeded to unravel the mystery.

"It's very simple, Miss Crile," he exclaimed positively, lighting a pudgy black cigar. "And this man Daggey could explain the whole thing if he wished to."

"What is your idea of the affair, Mr. Palmerton?"

"Simply this: Daggey, the burglar, had an accomplice who acted as lookout while Daggey was robbing the safe. They split the haul, Daggey taking the cash and his accomplice the bonds. Then they parted company, going in opposite directions so that at least one of them would have a fair chance of making a getaway. Daggey was nabbed by Jake Morrow, but his accomplice succeeded in escaping with the bonds. There's your mystery in a nutshell."

Barbara nodded slowly. "It might be as you say."

"Mr. Palmerton." It was Ansell's timorous voice at the door. "There is a committee from the plow works waiting to see you."

A quick frown disturbed Palmerton's equanimity for a moment. Then he rose importantly and gave Barbara a suave smile. "Pardon me, Miss Crile. I'll be back in a minute—just a minute."

After the door had slammed behind him, Barbara got up and slipped quietly to the heavy mahogany desk. A dainty pink envelope addressed in fine, erratic handwriting caught her eye. Quickly she drew out the single sheet of paper, and as she read its contents her red lips parted slightly in a cynical smile. Then she placed the letter back on the desk and glided to the door.

She could hear Palmerton's spontaneous oily tongue propounding an explanation of some sort. Silently she resumed her seat, and a few minutes later Palmerton blustered into the room.

"Merely some of the boys from the factory," he told her solemnly. "They were wanting to know about their bonds, the ones that were stolen."

"They won't lose their money, will they?" Barbara inquired.

"Well, perhaps not. But they are anxious about it; childish about money matters; no—ah—financial acumen, you know."

He absently drummed his fingers on the table for a moment. Presently a twitching smile crept to his lips, and he chuckled:

"By the way, I have a new clew, Miss Crile."

"Yes?"

PALMERTON settled himself with the easy grace of a practiced raconteur. "Mr. Tinley, a quaint old fellow who was our night marshal for a number of years, drew me aside while I was out in the main room now, and presented damning evidence he has discovered against our present marshal, Jake Morrow. It seems that he had heard of the burglar's statement, to the effect that some one else had got the Liberty Bonds.

"'Jake Morrow's the feller!' he whispered secretively. 'Jake Morrow's the feller! He stole them bonds! He hid behind the barrel in the alley and took 'em off o' this here burglar. Then he sneaked on down the alley and hid 'em, and when the burglar came along he arrested him.'

"'But,' I said, 'what makes you think that Jake would do a thing like that?'

"The old fellow became very dramatic. 'Well, he ain't got no alibi, has he? He's a good-for-nothin' nohow. The only reason that he got the night marshal job away from me was that he was in jail over half the time, and the city dads thought they might as well give the job to a steady boarder. And everybody knows that Jake got his hand shot off runnin' away from them Spaniards in the Spanish War. If you want my opinion, I'll tell ye that Jake Morrow's the feller that's got the bonds!'"

They laughed heartily.

"Perhaps we shouldn't laugh—under the circumstances," chuckled Palmerton, "but the old fellow—so quaint, you know! I wish you could have heard him!"

At the behest of a sudden thought, his face sobered, and he demanded abruptly: "But say, Miss Crile, isn't it altogether possible that Morrow is the—ah—guilty man? As Tinley says, he can't produce an alibi. And it's rather strange that he didn't hear the explosion—yes, very strange. Either Daggey had an accomplice who made off with the bonds or else Morrow has them. As—the more I consider the matter, the more I am inclined to believe that Morrow is the man. I think I'll keep my eye on him."

"You might be right," assented Barbara soberly. She got up. "I believe you said there was to be a directors' meeting at 2 o'clock. I'll try to be here for that. And, meantime, I think I'll go get some lunch and a little rest. There doesn't seem to be much to do, since the robber is caught."

Palmerton came very close and smiled down at her insinuatingly. "You're a mighty clever little woman, Miss Crile," he declared with rollicking enthusiasm. "I would regard it as an—ah—honor if you would allow me to take you to lunch."

With a sharp jerk at the knob Barbara flung the door wide open. "Not today, Mr. Palmerton," she said airily, stepping outside. "I wouldn't think of taking so much time from such a busy man as you."

Thirty minutes later she was conversing with Mrs. Cannady, proprietress of Cannady's boarding house, a decrepit, ungainly structure surrounded by a ragged hedge and tall untrimmed poplars. She had come, she told Mrs. Cannady, from the city for a month's vacation from her work, and she would require board and lodging while in Midwest. Could Mrs. Cannady accommodate her, and what would be the rates?

"I'll try to be a good boarder," she added with a bright smile.

Mrs. Cannady, a stout, middle-aged woman with a loose mouth and watery, gray eyes, answered rather eagerly that her best spare room was vacant, and it was nice and clean, and the young lady could have it immediately for fifty dollars a month, including board—which was extra cheap when one considered the high cost of everything. Hers was the best boarding house in town. All her boarders were nice people, too. There was Mr. Dooley, the druggist, who was nice; and Miss Cochran, the milliner; and Mrs. Ansell, the cashier of the bank. Sometimes even Mr. Pemberton, the richest man in town, you know, came down to eat her Sunday dinners. The young lady would like Miss Cochran. And Mr. Ansell was a perfect gentleman. Poor man, he worried so much about his wife, who was sick in California. . . . It was a nice summer, wasn't it? And had the young lady heard about the robbery? Nobody had ever thought Jake Morrow would have gumption enough to ketch a robber. . . .

By this time they were in the dark hallway upstairs, and Barbara fled from the verbal ebullition to the room that was to be hers.

Half an hour later she walked swiftly from the house, stepped into her car and drove to the telephone exchange.

Safely secluded in a long-distance booth, she called a number at the State capital.

"Hello—Woodward? This is Barbara Crile. . . . Oh, very well. It's ridiculously simple. . . . The old Jew? I thought so. . . . Well, it's all over but the shouting. . . . Yes, 2 o'clock. You can make the trip in fifty minutes. . . . All right; but don't show yourself."

PROMPTLY at 2 o'clock that afternoon Barbara Crile entered the directors' room of the bank, a brown leather traveling bag swinging in her hand. At her heels waddled Nap.

Very sleek and effusive after a satisfying lunch, Palmerton greeted her with an elaborate smile.

"Ah, Miss Crile, we were expecting you." Then, impressively, to the three unsmiling, leathern-faced farmers who sat in awkward attitudes about the room, "Gentlemen, this is Miss Crile, whom Mr. Woodward, the State bank examiner, sent down to investigate the robbery. Miss Crile—Mr. Hackett, Mr. Day and Mr. Corey, the directors of the bank."

"I am very glad to meet you gentlemen," said Barbara quietly. "My business with you won't take long. I want to get back to the city as——"

"I was just telling these gentlemen," broke in Palmerton energetically, "that if they had followed my advice regarding the installation of a new safe and vault, this robbery would not have been successful. They cannot deny that I urged them time and again to put in modern fixtures. And now, since the horse is stolen, perhaps they will be willing to lock the barn door. Perhaps——"

"You're quite right," interrupted Barbara. "But we haven't time to talk about that. Let's get down to business." She called Nap to her feet, laid the bag on the floor beside her, and turned to the fidgeting directors. "Of course, the main thing that interests you gentlemen is the whereabouts of the missing bonds. There have been many clews suggested. Did the robber, Shark Daggey, have an accomplice who made off with the bonds? Did Jake Morrow, your marshal, have anything to do with the disappearance? Or just who did steal them and where are they now? These are questions that agitate you, questions that I am going to answer for you. Very well, Mr. Palmerton, I wish you would call in your cashier, Mr. Ansell."

Nervous and worn-eyed, Ansell slipped into the room at Palmerton's brusque bidding.

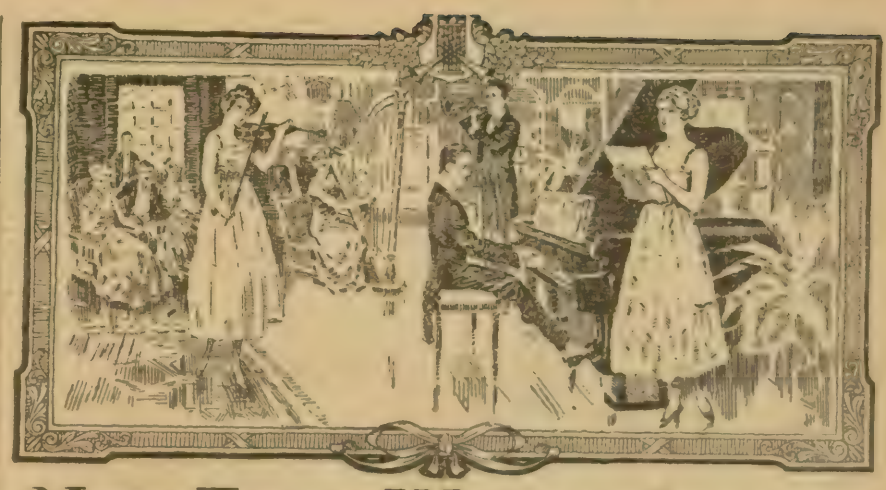
"Ansell," said Barbara slowly, facing him squarely, "what did you do with those bonds you stole?"

"Hold on!" cried Corey, one of the directors. "You're on the wrong track, lady. Harry didn't have nothin' to do with it. I'll stake my life on that!"

Ansell had recoiled in shaking dread and was gasping for words to express his denial.

"I—I—didn't—I didn't——" he mumbled lifelessly.

"Yes, but you did!" cried Barbara sharply. "Listen: At about midnight last night you got out of bed and started for a walk. You wore a long raincoat. You were worrying about your wife's illness. You couldn't sleep. As you neared the bank, you saw a man working in-

(Concluded on Page 18.)

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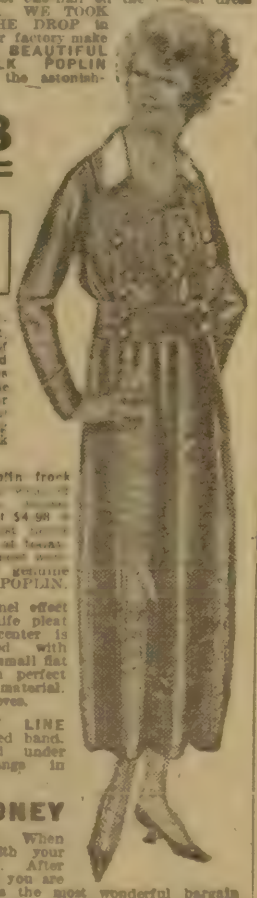

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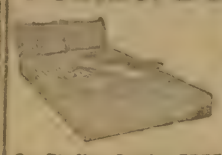

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Jungle Treasure

(Continued From Page 4)

"Perhaps," she vouchsafed, "but not many people, here in Borneo, at least, would agree with you. However, that is neither here nor there, Mr. Varden. I merely wish to be entirely frank with you, to warn you that if you throw in your lot with us you will be in deadly peril. Our enemy is clever, heartless, and very powerful. He will hate you the moment he sets eyes on you. But I have asked a question and I must have your answer to it before I say more. What is it, yes or no?"

Still smiling, he looked into her eyes searchingly for a moment, a gaze which she returned as fearlessly and calmly as it was given. Under that gaze Varden's smile faded and his jaws squared grimly.

"A little while ago," he said, "you told me that you had been praying for a—man. I hope that the future may prove that your prayers have been answered."

For a minute longer they looked at each other; then without saying another word the girl turned and swung off along the trail. For some time they walked as rapidly as the nature of the ground would permit, saying nothing; but Varden, at least, was thinking much. Of all the strange things which had happened to him in that land where strange adventures were an almost every-day occurrence, this latest trick of Fate was the strangest he had ever known. There were many things which as yet he by no means understood, but he followed his fair guide without hesitation, content in the thought that everything would be cleared up in time.

CHAPTER II.

THEY had been walking for nearly half an hour when the girl suddenly began to talk.

"My name is Ruth," she said. "My father, Gilbert Nash, is a professional hunter and wild animal catcher. He catches beasts alive, you know, and ships them to Europe and America, where they are sold to circuses and zoos. It used to be a splendid business; it paid well for several years, and it was then that Dad built the home you will see presently. This region is full of 'circus stock,' as we call it—monkeys, baboons, leopards, and many kinds of birds. The Dyaks were friendly, too, at first. But that was some time ago, before Dad sent for me to come here. I was away at school then, by mother had died soon after my birth, and I had not seen Dad since I was 3 years old."

She paused for a moment, apparently concerned with memories her words brought up; but when Varden said nothing she went on:

"Dad's been unlucky recently," she continued. "His health broke a few years ago—jungle fever, you know—and his business has suffered since. In fact, there is very little business left now. He ran in debt and began to lose his hold on the natives, who had been glad to work for him until then."

"Hard luck," Varden sympathized. "Such work is too strenuous for a sick man. It takes a firm hand to manage natives."

The girl walked a dozen yards before she said anything more.

"That isn't the worst of it," she resumed, finally. "I'm only a girl, but I've had some experience and I know natives. With Maka's help, I might have pulled things thru if I had been given the chance. But Victor Moreau got control of things. He was here when I came out from England a little over two years ago. He had loaned Dad some money, and—and there were other things. Dad can't break away from him now. If he only could, we might be all right."

"Yes," said Varden.

Ruth remained silent until they had negotiated a particularly bad stretch of the trail. When they paused to cool off a little she looked into her companion's face appealingly.

"All this must seem very, very strange to you, I know," she burst out, "but you must try to understand, Mr. Varden. Dad is not at all well—he has queer notions sometimes. Even I—his own child—cannot always understand him; and it may be very hard for you at first. Please try to be patient with him and—and help!"

"Of course," Varden returned, smiling. "That goes without saying; it's what I'm here for. But tell me more about this Moreau. Who and what is he? You called him a 'super-beast' a little while ago, I think."

"Yes," she answered, "and it is a good name for him. It fits the man. As for who or what he is I know little more than I've told you, except that he is an Eurasian. He appeared on the river one morning, Dad told me, in a big canoe with a dozen Dyak paddlers, and he has been here ever since. At first, I rather liked him. It is lonely here—it was especially so to me when I first came—and Victor Moreau can be very agreeable when he tries. He is well educated, not bad looking in a snaky way, and, as I've told you, he seemed to befriend Dad at first. It was not until after he got a firm foothold here that we learned his real character. Oh, he is a beast, I tell you!" she burst out suddenly, seeming to lose control of herself for an instant. "A brute! A—a devil! I would rather trust myself in the pens with any of our four-footed beasts than be alone with him. A leopard is at least sincere and open in his hatred, but Victor Moreau——"

She broke off as suddenly as she had begun, panting a little; and Varden eyed her thoughtfully. He understood more fully perhaps than she guessed what her words implied. He had had considerable experience and he knew what men—some men—will do when far from the controlling influence of any authority but the law of the strong arm. Ruth was a very pretty girl, and she had been practically at this man's mercy for over two years. The mere thought of such a condition made Varden's blood tingle. He was glad now, very glad, that their paths had crossed.

"I think I understand," he said soothingly. "He's a kind of snake in the grass, I take it. Pat you on the back with one hand while the other is picking your pockets. Isn't that it?"

The flush in the girl's tanned cheeks deepened.

"You've partly guessed it," she nodded, "but he is even worse than you think. Thru trickery and by working on their superstitions, he has won over most of the Dyaks until now they will obey no one but him and his henchman Chaka, their war chief. To all intents and purposes, as I've told you, Dad and I are prisoners in our own home. If it had not been for Maka and Rajah I think that I should have killed myself long ago."

"WHO is Maka?" Varden asked. "You've mentioned him several times."

"The only real friend I have here," she answered. "He is a native witch-doctor, a very old man and, for a native, a very wise one. He is the real power among the Dyaks, even Moreau fears him a little, I think, and he has been very good to me. It was Maka who predicted that a stranger—that you—would come from out of the jungle to help us. Heaven knows what I should have done without him. If it had not been for Maka's restraining influence and his hope of some day getting the treasure there is no telling what Moreau might have done."

"The treasure? What treasure?" Varden asked quickly, pricking up his ears.

"A lot of diamonds which are supposed to be hidden somewhere in the mountains beyond our village," she answered. "Personally, I think it is all a myth, altho Moreau believes in it and Maka is supposed to know where it is hidden. It was to locate the treasure that Moreau came here originally, I think, and he hopes thru me to worm the secret out of Maka. Dad, too, has gone half crazy over it all. He hopes, you see, to recoup his fortunes at one blow—pay Moreau what he owes him and all that. But he'll never do it, I'm afraid. Maka alone, if any one, knows the secret and he will never tell so long as Victor Moreau has a hand in things. Even if he did we should gain nothing. Moreau would take it all, of course."

"Perhaps," said Varden grimly, "but others might have something to say about that. Your father shall get his share if I have anything to say in the matter. But treasure-hunting is pretty uncertain at best. One can hardly bank on it. I think your father's original business is a better road to success. This idea of animal-catching and training rather appeals to me. Why can't we start things going again? I should be glad to help."

The girl caught her breath suddenly and her eyes dilated.

"Would you do that?" she breathed. "Oh, if we only could! But no; no I mustn't let you think of it—not yet at any rate. You don't realize all the conditions yet, Mr. Varden. Promise me that you won't mention this to Dad or Moreau until we've talked further. Promise?"

"Of course, if you wish it, but the scheme looks fairly sound to me. I——"

"You'll learn everything very soon," she interrupted, and put an abrupt end to the conversation by hurrying ahead of him along the trail.

The jungle grew thinner presently and the ground began to incline upward at a sharp angle. Soon they could walk side by side beneath huge trees which rose up at intervals between great rocks and broken bowlders. From these signs the American knew that they were nearing the mountains and he was not surprised when they stepped out upon a rock-strewn plateau which lay between the forest behind them and a low range of hills. Striking diagonally across this, the girl did not linger until she had picked her way thru the rocks to the shade of a small grove of trees which nestled at the foot of a hill.

As he came to a halt beside her the first thing that struck Varden's jungle-tired eyes was a wide fan-shaped valley which began almost at their feet and swept away to the mountains beyond. Thru the center of this valley ran a little river and on the farther side of this, approached by means of a narrow bridge, was a cluster of buildings. Most of these were of the native variety: Grass-thatched, hive-like affairs, raised on stilts to a height of about eight feet from the ground. One, however, was remarkably different.

THIS was a rambling one-story structure of the bungalow type, which had been erected on the summit of a little rise so that it overlooked the native huts. It was surrounded by a broad veranda and a high stockade of bamboo poles with a wide gate in the center of the side they were facing. Beyond this building, in itself an extraordinary sight in that region, they could catch a glimpse of a number of stout pens and cages. Half a mile farther up the valley a broad river, from which the little stream already mentioned had its origin, wound its sluggish way between the ranges of hills. Two or three native women and children could be seen moving among the huts; otherwise there was no sign of life.

"Your home, I presume," Varden remarked, with a glance at his companion.

"Yes. I hope we are in time. Moreau has been away all day hunting and he seldom returns before night. I should like to have you meet Dad before he comes, if possible. If we meet any one on our way thru the village let me do the talking, please. I shall take you straight to the house. You will call me Ruth, please—it saves bother and we can't afford to be ceremonious here. Try not to be surprised at anything you may see or hear and don't volunteer too much information. We met by accident in the jungle where you were just in time to kill that Dyak in my defense! Understand?"

He nodded, but said nothing for a moment. Her request to be called by her given name struck him as a little odd, for he realized instinctively that this request had nothing of coquetry in it. There was evidently some deep-rooted reason why she shrank from hearing the rest of her name. It seemed almost as if she were ashamed, or was there some other reason for that tell-tale blush and her momentary evasion of his glance? He could not tell exactly, but he felt that when he knew that reason he would know why she had been so glad to meet him on the trail.

"I understand," he replied, at length. "You may depend on me. Which way do we go now? Down the hill yonder, or . . ."

He had raised his arm abruptly to point toward where the plateau dropped away in a sharp slope down to the valley, when she uttered a little scream and sprang forward. "Look out!" she cried. "Look out!"

But her warning came too late. Even as she spoke Varden's rifle was sent spinning and he went backward as suddenly as tho he had been struck by lightning. Crouching over him and growling horribly, his bared fangs and grinning lips within six inches of the fallen man's face, was a huge ape, which had sprung from the leafy shelter of the tree above their heads.

For a few tense seconds after the girl's shrill cry there was an almost complete silence, broken only by the low throaty growls of the ape. Then the great beast became active. It grasped the prostrate man by the hair of his head with one terrible hand and with a swift swoop of the other tore his shirt half off his body. Half stunned by his fall and without his rifle, Varden was almost helpless; but in spite of the weight of the beast upon him he slid his hand beneath him to feel for his automatic. Maddened apparently by the sight of the man's white throat and chest, the ape bent his head and buried his fangs in his victim's shoulder.

Varden felt the hot, rank breath full in his face, and strove desperately to throw himself to one side as a terrible pain stabbed into his shoulder and arm. Then he became dimly aware of a fresh commotion above him. Something struck the ape a heavy blow across the eyes.

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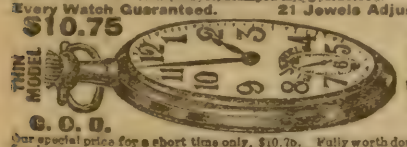

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and with a horrible snarl the creature relinquished his grip and reared up.

At the same time, Varden could hear Ruth screaming:

"Back, Rajah! Back! Do you hear me? Back, I say!"

For an instant the ape remained crouched over his prey; then his deep growls changed to something not unlike a whimper, and he drew back before the fury of the girl, who as she screamed at the beast had been striking at him with her clubbed rifle.

Varden sat up,, the blood from his wounded shoulder running over his chest in a little stream, and looked around him in a dazed fashion.

"You've saved my life, Ruth," he said weakly. "I——" and he fainted away into a blackness where he was blissfully unconscious of jungle mysteries, blissfully ignorant of the plots and counterplots that would entangle him during the days to come, blissfully unknowing of the strange drama concerning his own fate, in which the giant ape with the fetid breath must play a strange part.

Varden was beginning a long trail that was to wind dangerously close to the dark valley from which no man returns. Read in the next Ledger how he became further involved with these mysterious strangers.

❦ ❦ ❦

The Tempest Born.

(Concluded From Page 6.)

night of the wind and the tempest. Without hesitation he drove his fist ruthlessly against her white forehead. She fell a dead weight against him, but he managed to secure the rope under her arms. Then came the crucial test of his scheme.

It seemd an eternity that he waited, his feet braced rigidly, the supporting rope jerking cruelly at his waist as those on shore tugged at the hauling line. Inch by inch his feet lost their grip upon the slippery rock, and just when he felt that they would not hold for another second, the tension relaxed.

Dropping exhausted on top of Darget's limp body, he closed his eyes and drew in deep breaths of the moisture-laden air.

A tug upon the line announced that the time had come for a second struggle. The iron eye with its dangling harness was jerkily sliding toward him. He pulled the line taut and it came faster.

When Buck had given the signal and felt the weight of Darget's body upon the line, he knew that he had attempted the impossible.

Still he held firm, his over-burdened muscles seeming to crack from the strain, the world growing black and the foundation slowly sliding from beneath his feet. He would hold until the other was somewhere near the shore, then Darget would be forced to take an equal chance against the torrent with his rescuer. As his feet lost their hold upon the rock, Buck was speculating dully whether there would be life in both bodies dragged ashore, in one, or neither.

IT WAS to the sensation of something soft and moist and warm pressed against his forehead that Buck attributed his awakening. He felt an inclination to turn, and opened his eyes, startled by the excruciating pain of the effort.

For a full minute he stared wonderingly at Marcia's clear complexion, at the blue-green welt that disfigured her forehead, and puzzled for a moment at the tear on its way down her right cheek. Then memory opened its doors.

"Marshy," he whispered hoarsely, "you wasn't kissin' me, just then?"

A perfect flood of tears followed in the wake of the one which had surprised him.

A troubled look crept over the face of the man. Perhaps it was because Buck had had so little experience in struggling with a conscience that conscience won out this time.

"Yo—you hadn't oughtter do that, Marshy. I ain't—I ain't wuth it. I done cut the bridge an' left you stranded thar. But Lordy knows, I never meant——"

A firm little hand placed over his mouth smothered the rest of the sentence. Marcia drew herself up, apparently oblivious of Mrs. Darget, who was ministering to her husband in the adjoining bunk.

"'T don't make no diff'rence to me what you done, or what you tried to do, Buck; it's what a man is that counts with me. An', Buck, Pap says yore all of a man—so I reckon that goes."

❦ ❦ ❦

Fine Feathers and Cupid's Darts

THE youth of 18 indignantly appealed to his father for aid.

"Look at that little shrimp," he said, indicating the 15-year-old brother. "He's got on a pair of my silk socks now! All he does is go to my bureau and lift things whenever he wants 'em. I can't make him stop! You've got to."

Brown turned to his younger son.

"What's this I hear?" he queried.

The 15-year-old looked worried.

"Well, you see, dad," he explained, "it's this way. I just got my long pants suit. And you say that's enough expense for a while, that I'll have to earn the stuff that goes with it."

"But that doesn't excuse your helping yourself whenever you feel like it," interrupted the father. "That isn't the way I meant you to earn."

"Can't you understand?" pleaded the youngster. "Things cost so much. And there's Louise."

The older brother turned and grinned.

"In love," he said. "I knew it."

"And there's another guy in the game," protested the borrower. "His dad gives him everything he needs. He wears a new silk shirt every day and has all the fancy ties he wants. You see, his old man's a bricklayer and can afford to.

"S'pose I'm going to lose out with Louise like that? Say, I'm spending all my money on theaters and sodas and boat rides in the park now. So when I go out for a call—gee, I gotta look like something. Can't you understand?"

"All I know is that the last time you used a pair of socks of mine you wore a big hole in the heel. So you take those off!" was the unrelenting reply.

"Aw-w-w, Jim, have a heart."

"Take 'em off"—the elder brother grew more excited. "Dad, he's got on one of my $3 silk ties. My latest one. It's got to end. Gimme that, shrimp, or——"

The 15-year-old urchin edged furtively to the door.

"Please lemme wear 'em just for tonight! I want to show Louise——"

The youth of 18 made a dash. His junior, however, was too quick for him and fled, pausing long enough to slam the front door. It opened to reveal a youth's figure in a new long trousers suit far down the street. In ten seconds he was mounting the steps of the apartment building in which dwelt Louise.

"My boy," began his father when the 18-year-old had given up the pursuit.

"Oh, it's all right, dad," said the youth, smiling indulgently again. "Bill is young, and when a young man is in love he should not be held responsible."

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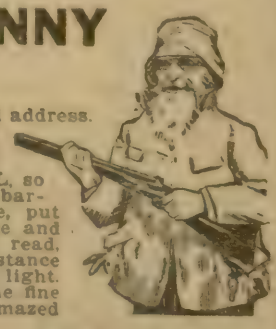

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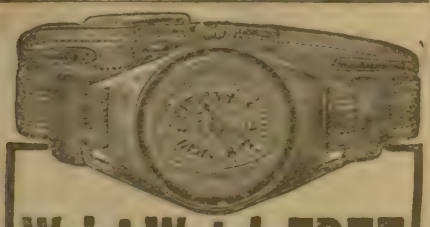

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The Dark Mirror

(Continued From Page 9)

the patience, the compassion of the physician served. . . .

"But what am I to do?" she demanded in a calmer phase. "I tell you, Philip, I can't stand it; I can't go on like this knowing she's in deadly peril, not knowing what to do, knowing she needs me, not knowing how to get to her, to help her. . . . It isn't imagination, Philip—it's so. I know it's so, that she's in danger, threatened, afraid; something in me knows and shares her sufferings and won't—can't be still. If I only could get at that knowledge somehow, drag it out of me—because it's there—I feel it's there"—one hand touched her bosom—"struggling to find expression, wanting nothing better than a chance to explain itself. . . . Philip, won't you help me?"

His head described a slow sign of regret. "I'm doing my best, Priscilla——"

"I mean, hypnotism——"

"No——"

"You must, Philip, you must! You can't refuse me, you can't let me go on in this torment when it's so simple for you, who know how, to relieve my mind. I'm not afraid of being hypnotized by you. You've explained everything so clearly, I know it's nothing but the utilization of a natural means to remove the barrier between the two states of consciousness, so that the imprisoned subconscious can find expression. Philip, you won't refuse me this once? You see what this thing is doing to me, you know I'll go mad if I don't find relief——"

He gave a gesture of surrender, and got up from his chair.

"As you will," he said. "Perhaps, after all, you know best."

He arranged pillows at the head of a couch. "Lie down here—rest—relax. Remember that, as you've just declared, you've got nothing to fear from the hypnotic trance, something as natural as sleep—even more natural, if what I believe of it is true."

"I am not in the least afraid."

WITH a readiness and docility which he thought touching, she suffered Fosdick to make her comfortable upon the couch. He was insistent upon an attitude of complete relaxation, supine, the head barely elevated by a thin down pillow, the ankles together but not crossed, the hands open at either side. Further, he bade her loosen her locked teeth, so that they no longer touched. And drawing a chair close to the head of the couch, he sat down and with his own hands smoothed out the strained, contracted muscles round her eyes and mouth and brows.

She lay quietly, looking up into his face, interested, intent, a trifle diverted.

"You are more at ease already."

It was less inquiry than statement of fact. Her drooping lids assented.

"When do you begin——?"

"Presently. First you must rest."

"How do you do it, Philip—with passes of the hands——?"

He smiled: "I fancy that won't be necessary, so long as I have your confidence."

"Oh, you have!"

"I know. But don't talk—don't think any more than you can help. Keep your eyes fixed on mine, but don't keep it up if it tires you. As soon as it's an effort, shut your eyes. Now remember: Avoid thinking"—the pressure on her forehead became more gently urgent—"simply rest."

His touch, his tone, his presence, were all soothing. Already she was pleasantly aware of slackening nervous tension. In her eyes a vague smile formed.

"Drowsy?"

Her lips framed but did not utter the word "no." She was not in the least sleepy, but deliciously at ease. The weight of his hand on her forehead was like an imponderable force of obliterating influence. It needed no effort to refrain from thinking, it was the easiest, therefore the natural thing to do. Consciousness was slowly retreating into a boundless space of inertia. She had no desire to restrain it . . .

She did not know that her eyes had closed of their own accord, and spent a moment in idle speculation concerning the singular disappearance of Philip's face.

He had not moved, she knew; his hand still rested on her forehead. But his voice sounded far away:

"Sleep . . ."

She wondered that he should bid her sleep or wish her to. Perhaps it was because he thought it would better prepare her for the ordeal of the hypnotic trance—if it were any ordeal. But it was odd that he should not understand she was now finding a rest more exquisite than one could possibly find in sleep . . .

"Sleep . . ."

Iteration of that monosyllable excited no more interest. She had become completely engrossed with the phenomenon of respiration, her own breathing, its tempered, constant ebb and flow, upon which her being swung like a leaf in a tideway . . .

"Sleep . . ."

She had no desire to sleep, felt no need of it. Never had she known such absolute command of all her faculties. The sensation of being acutely alive was extraordinary, without precedent.

Yet curiously assorted with this was a sort of exterior numbness, as if her body were altogether enfolded in an unknown element, like air but more ethereal.

With this there was like concentration of the attention, which, turning in upon itself, became in a way magnified and marvelously luminous.

In this state of unconsciousness the soul dwelt in exalted abstraction. . . . But not for long; how long, there could be no computing; consciousness of measured time had been abolished. Nevertheless the period of that detachment was not unlimited, it had an end. To the soul came a summons, a calling from out the vast which it could by no means ignore.

And the I that was the soul of the girl stirred itself and arose and went forth, seeking.

In this there was no faltering, neither question nor doubt, there was indeed no choice; the call had sounded and response might not be delayed. The call was from Leonora; it was the soul of Leonora, voiceless, calling to its own, calling without rest thru the space from a far and unknown point.

And the spirit to which its soundless call was tuned answered and fared forth, seeking, forever seeking . . .

There were no bounds to the sphere of that search, no barriers to hinder it; the earth and the sea and the air and the spaces between the stars were within its scope and the infinite distances beyond. Her soul fared far and far, seeking the source of that summons that, once sounded, was now never still, the call that led and eluded, that fled and pursued.

Time beyond reckoning was consumed, yet the search had no end, the soul adventured fruitlessly, its yearning was denied.

AT LAST it returned; weary and frustrated and spent it came back to its own place, to the tenement of flesh that was its temple and the tower of its refuge, and there rested upon and within itself, tormented by knowledge of its failure, haunted by the call . . .

Then that which it had sought and found not, sought it in turn, and it was found, the I that was Leonora was joined to the I that was Priscilla, and the two were as one, and the was comfort in this apprehension of oneness.

But there was likewise sorrow and dread that had neither of them any form. But as if the very fact of their reunion forbade them rest, the one that was two stirred and rose up again and once more committed itself to the toil and fatigue of search, whipped on and on by the lash of a necessity that had no name . . .

But this time the search found an end . . .

There was in a forest a pool, a dark, still pool in a forest dark and still. Huge boughs of ancient trees, weighed down with their burden of interwoven foliage, overhung the water, darkening its face to blackness with their shadows, shedding a twilight in between.

The air of this place was sluggish, dank and warm and without movement, it was heavy with the cloying sweet breath of mould. Neither was there any movement in the pool, tho its still black

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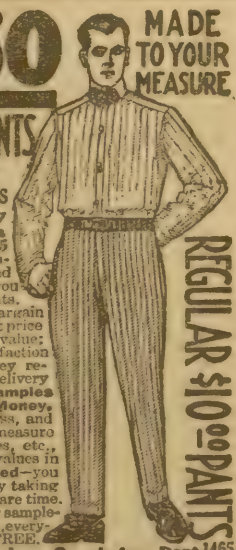

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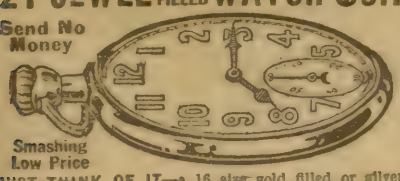

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plaque was broken by a white, cold, wet face upturned, the face of a drowned woman whose clothed body was vaguely revealed by the stained element in which it was suspended.

To the smitten spirit of Priscilla it was as if she gazed at her own face, still and calm in sleep, counterfeited in the depths of a wide, dark mirror.

But the face, she knew, was the face of Leonora, who was dead.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

TEMPTATION.

"DEAD . . . she is dead . . . Leonora is dead . . ."

The words, barely audible, hardly more than moans, breathed from the lips of the woman lying in hypnosis. Fosdick, sitting by her side, on the edge of the couch, bending over her, conned her face intently. The long lashes were fluttering, tears welled from under lowered lids, the lips writhed with grief. She moaned again, an inarticulate pure note of woe passing speech, and shuddered in her trance.

He captured her two wrists as her hands twitched up, groping as one's hands will who walks in darkness, and imprisoned them gently in the clasp of one of his own. The other he pressed again upon her forehead.

"Priscilla!" he called in an even but urgent voice—"come out of it! Forget your vision. See nothing. . . . Do you hear me?"

The anguish of the face of the sleeper grew transiently more acute, then faded as he repeated the unanswered question: "Do you hear me?" This time the girl responded dully: "Yes."

"You understand what I am saying?"

"Yes, Philip . . ."

"You are to see nothing more. . . . Do you see anything now?"

There was a slight pause; then the sleeper stated without emotion: "I see nothing now."

"Good. Now you will sleep, you will sleep quietly, without dreaming, for thirty minutes. Then you will wake up rested, refreshed, calm, rational. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Philip."

"Repeat what you are going to do."

In a toneless voice Priscilla recited: "I am going to sleep quietly, without dreaming, for thirty minutes. Then I am going to wake up rested, refreshed, calm, rational."

"Do so."

She made no response more than a profound sigh. The stamp of sorrow upon those exquisite features had already been modified; their expression now grew placid. The agitated, gusty breathing passed into the steady, slow and deep respiration of natural slumber.

Fosdick sighed in relief; but his countenance continued grave with care, the brows knotted, the lips compressed, the eyes harboring a look of pain.

He moved over to his desk and dropped wearily into the chair, made as if to draw the telephone to him, hesitated. Resting an elbow on the desk, he bent his head upon his hand, covering his eyes, and for some moments sat in a state of sore perplexity and indecision.

What was his duty?

It was in his power to renew in Priscilla the condition of hypnotic susceptibility long enough to erase by suggestion all waking memory of her vision. By so doing he might spare her much suffering, much distress; the pity and horror of that lonely death, and the mystery of it, would not prey upon her sensitive and susceptible nature. And, believing Leonora still to be living happily with the man Mario, her husband, Priscilla might in time grow reconciled, school herself to renunciation, forget, and ultimately rebuild her life upon the foundation of a saner, surer love.

On the other hand, Fosdick knew, no will of his, no wile, no power known could cast out memory of that vision from her unconscious mind. There it must live on, in repression but deathless and mutinous, demanding always that acknowledgment which was its right, always denied; and inevitably in some fashion for that neglect it would avenge itself upon the girl.

So may we all purchase forgetfulness of things that sadden us, things that hurt, memories of failure, omissions, blunders, losses, sins; but if we purchase we must pay the cost.

Nature has no mercy for those who would ignore her; such insolence goes never unrequited. . . .

But if Priscilla were permitted to come back to herself with full knowledge of what she had seen in her trance; believing Leonora dead, what would the effect be upon her life?

She would be sad, she would mourn, it would be long before her days would be undarkened by shadows of dread and distrust.

But she would not dream, there would be no more journeys of the spirit thru the hollowness of night and space in futile search for that affinity which had gone out of life.

Against this the consideration warred that, no longer needing to reckon with the claims of Leonora, Priscilla would less readily disembarrass herself from the toils of an insane and impossible infatuation.

With Mario free, no reason existed why she should scruple to give him all her love. . . .

Dared one risk perpetuation of that passion?

Indeed, one may query, can she risk perpetuation of a love which she feels for Mario, only as Leonora? The big scene where Priscilla and Mario meet is coming. It comes in the installment following the next. Therefore—don't miss the next!

"Men Are So Queer!"

"YOU might call the situation strained at my house," confided the woman in the pretty checked gingham. "There is a state of armed neutrality between Herbert and the rest of the family and goodness knows how it will end!"

"Dreadful!" gasped the lady who was watering the geranium flower box on her back porch. "I've always pointed you out as being a model family and devoted to one another!"

"That's what made the trouble," the woman in the checked gigham explained. "We can't exist without one another and that leads to all sorts of complications.

"Why, when Herbert said he had to go to Indianapolis on business and would be away from home two nights it was a real calamity, and the boys and I said we really didn't see how we could stand it, and what on earth would we do during that long and dismal time!

"The day he was to leave he cheered up a bit at dinner because he had found he could take an 11 o'clock train, thus giving him the evening at home with us and, of course we were delighted—tho to tell the truth I had planned to pass that evening going thru my boxes of sewing scraps and to fix up some closets—messy work that takes time and that one can't do when a man's around."

"Isn't it so!" agreed the lady with the geranium box.

"Exactly," said the gingham lady with the tragedy in the family. "So I read a 50-cent magazine and looked as expensive as I could and bade Herbert farewell with true emotion. The next evening when after dinner Thomas dolled up and prepared to go out I impressed it upon him that since his father was away he must return home early, because I didn't want to be left alone. Thomas, being 18, is in love and it was a calamity having to leave Emeline's front porch at 10 o'clock, but, as the man of the family, he heroically promised to sacrifice himself for the cause. Then I told Johnny that he and I would go to the movies. Nobody likes movies in our family but Johnny and myself, so both of us were greatly excited at this chance for a spree. The picture we wanted to see was at some distance, but we were feeling reckless and took the street car. We had a beautiful time and patronized an ice cream parlor later. Then we found the Smiths on their front porch and went and called on them at 10 o'clock, positively hilarious by this time because of our roistering evening. It was not that we were not missing Herbert, but——"

"I know precisely," sympathized the geranium lady.

"WELL, at last John and I neared our domicile, giggling with joy at the thought of the wrath of Thomas, who had presumably been home since 10 o'clock. Behold, there were bright lights all over the place! Possibly there was a fire and the neighbors had rushed in, so we tore up the stairs to the third floor.

"Opening the door I beheld, standing beaming triumphantly, nobody less than Herbert. Technically speaking I should have hurled myself with wild cries of rapture upon his chest, but I did nothing of the sort.

"'Well!' I stammered stupidly, 'what are you doing here?'

"'Why, I found,' chortled my husband, 'that I was getting thru a day earlier than I expected, so I came home—isn't that fine?'

"'Lovely,' I still stammered.

"It is so confusing when your husband has said he would be away two nights to find he hasn't been away at all. It is so hard to readjust your mind.

"Just then Thomas hurtled up the stairs and stared at his male parent.

"'Oh, heck!' he said aggrievedly. 'Dad's home! If I'd known that I could a-stayed an hour longer at Emeline's! Oh, heck!'

"'Well!' cried Herbert majestically, 'it seems to me that this family is decidedly not glad to see me! I am relieved to learn the true estimation in which I am held——' and so forth."

"Don't they always act that way, tho!" commented the geranium lady. "It's no use trying to make 'em understand! You'll have to make lemon cream pie and strawberry shortcake for dessert for a week to lead his mind away from it!"

"It's coming hard," sighed the woman in the checked gingham. "We certainly are stepping artfully at my house these days, the boys and I! Men are so queer!"

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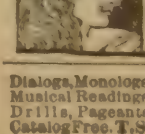

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A Matter of Exchange

(Concluded From Page 13)

side, heard a muffled explosion. An idea came to you—keep still now! You saw an opportunity of gaining unlawful possession of the package of Liberty Bonds without being suspected. You hid behind a barrel in the alley. You tied a white handkerchief over the lower part of your face. You held up Daggey, the burglar. You took from him his gun and the package of bonds. Because you were in a hurry and because you knew that the bonds would be the bigger haul, you left his bag undisturbed. You ran back to Mrs. Cannady's and entered the house at the same time that Jake Morrow's three pistol shots rang out."

"It's a lie!" screamed Ansell with a mighty shudder. "Don't believe her, Corey! Don't any of you believe her! She can't prove it! I didn't——"

"You didn't?"

Barbara's tone was scornful. She reached a swift hand into the leather bag at her side and tossed upon the table an oblong, brown, paper-covered package.

"You didn't? Then how did you come into possession of this package? And why did you hide it under the loose flooring of your room at Mrs. Cannady's, where I found it?"

She faced the others, who were staring greedily at the package and its red-penciled inscription, "Liberty Bonds, $18,000." "Gentlemen, this is the missing package."

Ansell's head bowed. He covered his twitching face with thin bloodless hands.

"God!" he choked. "I—I did it! Had to have—money. It was for—for Lottie!"

COREY eyed him sorrowfully. But the eyes of the other directors were still fastened eagerly on the package.

In a fine rage Palmerton confronted the miserable cashier. "So, you're the man!" he shouted. "You're the man who stole the bonds that belong to my boys! You, a trusted employe of the bank, played false to the men who gave you your life's needs!"

Barbara lifted a calming hand. "Just a minute, Mr. Palmerton. I think we would do well to examine the contents of this package."

"Now you're talkin'," agreed Hackett, stepping to the table and grabbing up the package.

He cut the binding strings, tore away the covering and revealed a neat stack of heavy brown sheets of paper.

A triple groan of anguish rose from the directors.

Palmerton sprang at the cashier. "What did you do with the bonds?" he demanded. "I'm on to your little game! You robbed the burglar of the bonds, took them from the package and exchanged these sheets of paper for them."

"Oh, no, he didn't," interrupted Barbara quickly.

She turned to the directors. "Gentlemen, the man who exchanged these sheets of paper for the bonds was neither the burglar nor Ansell. The man was your oily-tongued, seemingly prosperous president, Benjamin Palmerton!"

"What!" Palmerton drew back stiffly. "Be careful, young lady," he warned in his most dignified tone. "You——"

But Barbara interrupted him again. "Oh, you big bluffer!" she cried. "It's a wonder to me that you've got by as long as you have. Listen: A day or two ago you took those bonds from the package in the safe and exchanged that stack of brown paper for them. Why? Because you were two weeks behind in your factory pay roll, because you were unable to get credit anywhere, because you were on the verge of bankruptcy, because your blonde friend who signs herself 'Gloria' was bleeding you of every cent you could scrape up. You took the bonds to the city and sold them to a Jewish pawnbroker named Rafael. Oh, yes you did! You had intended making a getaway today, but the bank robbery, in which the bogus package was stolen, first by Daggey and then by Ansell, enabled you to put on a bold front with but little chance of detection."

"Is that so?" sneered Palmerton.

He whipped a heavy revolver from his pocket and backed toward the door. With a wicked growl Nap sprang up and started to lunge at him.

"Nap!" commanded Barbara sharply.

The aroused bulldog bowed his ugly head and returned to her side.

"Yes, you'd better call your dog back!" snarled Palmerton, still facing them while he jerked open the door behind him. "And it'll take more than a fast hussy and three tight-wad farmers to——"

From the doorway behind him a strong brown hand flashed down over his shoulder and forced the muzzle of the weapon high into the air Something hard and convincing pressed against his fat-covered ribs A pair of handcuffs clicked on his wrists

His captor, a stocky chap with set, expressionless face and mild blue eyes, turned to Barbara.

"Why, hello, Woodward!" cried Barbara cheerfully. "You're just in time." Then to Nap, "Come on, Nap. It's time to go home."

Peace at Last

MRS. WHITEAPPLE was sitting on the porch when Mrs. Schwartz passed by.

"How do you do?" asked Mrs. Schwartz, pausing at the gate. "It's a very fine evening, isn't it?"

Mrs. Whiteapple agreed, and invited her up. "That is, if you aren't in a hurry," she said. "You see," Mrs. Whiteapple went on as her friend made herself comfortable in a wicker rocker, "I've been pretty lonesome for several nights, and am just aching to talk to some one."

Mrs. Schwartz was surprised. "Is your husband ill?" she queried.

"Oh, no. John is very well, and so is our boy Jack, but very little of their company I get these days."

She stopped with a little sigh. "Ever since Jack came home from the Army it has been the same old story, and I guess it will not end until he is licked."

"Licked!" exclaimed Mrs. Schwartz. "You don't mean to tell me——"

"No, no!" interrupted Mrs. White apple. "Not that way! It's this way! Before Jack left home for the Army, he and his father played an occasional game of checkers. Not very often, because Mr. Whiteapple was usually as easy winner and he did not care to play when the winning was too simple. However, when Jack was in service, the boy managed to learn the game very well and when he returned he challenged his father to a contest. Jack won, and has won every game since. And now Mr. Whiteapple has sworn to play every evening until he wins. He's positively excited about it. Of course, Jack is enjoying it hugely, as it is all in revenge for his former defeats. And I am the innocent bystander."

"You poor thing!" said Mrs. Schwartz, "I can imagine how you must feel."

"I do hope," went on Mrs. Whiteapple, "that Jack grows tired of these evening sessions and purposely loses. As it is, the daily program for them is 'supper, checkers, bed.' I know that John has some business that ought to be taken care of, but it seems that he has forgotten all about it. And then he must see the painters and carpenters if we are to have our home fixed up this spring. 'That can all wait,' he says when I mention the matter to him. It will have to, I suppose.

"But worst of all, I've missed two perfectly good motion picture plays this week. I know they must be just lovely, from what Mrs. Higgins says of them. And tonight they're showing Arline Arlina in 'Should the Daughter Sing?' at the Rosethorn theater. I'm going to miss that also, it seems. Oh——"

The front door opened and Whiteapple came out, followed by Jack. The latter was grinning, while the former appeared greatly pleased.

"Well, Ann, I licked him at last!" said Whiteapple. "It was hard work, tho. Let's go to the Rosethorn and celebrate."

* * *

Had a Farm to Look After

"HUMPH!" said the man of medicine to Farmer Wakefield, after he had examined his patient. "You say you haven't taken much physic in your time?"

"Not much, doctor," replied the countryman.

"Well, I'll give you a bottle of something that will soon put you right if you carry out my instructions. Take the medicine regularly every four hours."

The farmer took the large bottle of medicine, placed it in his bag, and paid the fee. A few hours later he returned.

"Look here, doctor," he exclaimed, "I've got my farm to look after when I get back, and if you think I've got nothing else to do but come up to this place every four hours when I want a fresh bottle you're jolly well mistaken. You'd better take this back and let's have a barrel!"

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The Last Installment of

The Looting of the Limited

By Franklin Stringfellow

Last Week's Developments

While detectives and constables kept on the trail of the smaller of the two train robbers—whoever he may be—it remained for the irrepressible Charley Browne to make more discoveries than all of the other man hunters. He found that the little man had stopped at the abode of an isolated family, secretly exchanged some of his clothes and left nearly all of his money in a discarded vest.

BILL STREETER, a local constable, tried to "horn in" on Charley's detective work, but the railroad lad would have little of his assistance. Bill was quite a "character"—and a something of a comedian.

Meanwhile the little man, whom Charley Browne still was convinced was the much-wanted Danny Krell, branded by the newspapers as leader in the latest train robbery, continued his efforts to get away from the scene of that sensational event by outwitting his pursuers. All the mysteries are cleared up in the concluding installment that follows.

This story began in No. 39, the Ledger for Sept. 25. Back copies may be obtained from our agents or newsdealers.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE hands of the clock pointed to seven fifty-nine when Charley Browne returned, a sadly disappointed and disgusted young man, to the manifold duties of a night operator. He had wasted half an hour in fruitless search for a man he instinctively knew could not be far distant, and he was hot and tired and a little wet. Also, the Limited was due to arrive in fifteen minutes, and he found that his work had piled up frightfully. No wonder he felt vexed in spirit.

Without pausing to remove his coat he slammed shut the door, took several short messages off a very insistent wire, sold five or six tickets, looked up the rating on a lot of special freight for an important shipper, and rushed back to the signaling wire again. He wasted not a moment of the short space allowed him until train time.

Right in the midst of it all in came Streeter, fat, leisurely, and smiling. For a moment he eyed the lively clerk in silence. "I'd like to have your job—nit," he commented, heavily.

"Where you been hanging out?" Charley inquired, without, however, pausing in his duties.

Streeter considered. "Well, I rang the box; then I hung around in Green's lunchroom till the rain let up a bit; and when I started back I glimpsed a little guy that kind of looked like this here Danny Krell you was telling me about, and I trailed——"

"Did you get him?"

"No," answered Streeter, regretfully, "I didn't. It wasn't the guy. I trailed him into a cigar store, and just as I was about to grab him, he turns and shakes hands with me. "I am a detective," he says, "sent out here by the B. & O. people." And then we got to talking, and he asked me a lot of questions. A fine little feller. I came near making——"

"You did! You made the greatest blunder in the world!" With a bound Charley landed beside the astonished cop, told him tersely and without reserve his opinion of all cops and their sleuthing abilities, gave him a quarter-minute sketch of the happenings of his wasted half hour, and backed him thru the door.

"Go get him, Bill," he urged tensely. "He's the very man we are hunting for."

It is little things in this world that count—sometimes; and this was one of the times. Had Streeter been allowed to remain within the ticket office, it is extremely doubtful as to whether a certain undersized individual, wearing a suit of decent black, a stiff hat that might have been a size or so smaller, and possessed of a painful limp, would have mustered sufficient courage to approach and purchase a ticket admitting him passage on the train that even then was thundering and puffing and whistling in the near distance.

As it was, however, the little man had sauntered slowly up the platform and reached the telegraph office window in time to witness the entrance of Streeter thru the rear door.

"I better hadn't get a ticket after all," he muttered. "No telling what that fat bull might do. I'll risk paying the con."

A moment later he witnessed the departure of the "bull," and changed his mind. One sharp glance about him, another at the swiftly approaching train and he reached the ticket window.

"Ticket to Fairberry, young man," he announced hurriedly, glancing the length and breadth of the waiting-room. "Say, young fellow, can't you hurry? My train's coming!"

And Charley, who had heard the command and recognized the owner of the voice, and who for the moment was stricken quite motionless with astonishment, recovered sufficiently to attend his duties of office. Once the outlaw was safely on the train, it would be an easy matter to tip off the crew.

"CERTAINLY, sir. Two-thirty-eight. Thanks." Quivering with excitement, Charley delivered the mileage and swept the change into the drawer. Silently he watched the little man turn, clump heavily thru the waiting-room and out the door. Then came the thought, born by the casual contact of his hand with a lump in the side pocket of his coat. "If somebody else captures that gent, perhaps they won't share up the reward with me." And the idea didn't appeal to him a little bit.

"I wish Bill was here," he muttered, then, realizing the futility of the wish, he reached a decision. "I'll do it myself!" Forthwith his hand closed firmly over the handle of his revolver, and he reached the platform just as the Limited came to a grinding stop. Thanks to the drizzle that was still falling, few people were standing about, and Charley had no trouble in locating his quarry at a glance. The little man was making swiftly for the smoking car.

Charley wasted no time in preliminaries. Beyond question this was the man wanted. In every feature he answered the description the laborer had given of his departed guest. And he was worth five hundred dollars to Charley in case Charley captured him. And Charley set his teeth together and vowed that he would capture the little man if he had to shoot a hole thru him in order to do so. And, it may be added, he captured him nearly without a struggle.

"Hands up!" said Charley, intercepting his quarry as he was about to swing aboard the train. "Hands up!" As the little man hesitated, Charley thrust the nose of the revolved into the pit of his stomach, and for a third time voiced the command: "Hands up, I say!"

Up went the hands of the little outlaw; then, as tho ashamed of being captured so easily, he lowered them again swiftly and turned to run. But luck was against him. The platform was both wet and greasy, and, in turning, his feet slipped and he fell heavily. In a twinkling Charley was upon him. "Better keep quiet," he advised his struggling captive. "Remember, you are worth the same money dead or alive."

Without further struggle the little man lay quietly until rescued from his abasing position by a couple of policeman and a clanging patrol wagon.

The hands of the ticket office clock pointed to 9. Charley Browne, having caught up with his work, suddenly bethought himself of something, and reached for the telephone book. A moment later he had reached for the phone and was giving Central orders to connect him with a certain party. He got the party's mother. Charley listened intently to what she had to say, then: "Well, Mrs. Long, tell Sim not to worry about it any longer and go to sleep. I captured the man a while ago; tell him, and that fifty dollars of the reward goes to him."

Charley shut off a flood of embarrassing thanks by the simple method of hanging up the receiver. Slightly flushed, he turned his smiling face to Streeter.

"What's on your mind, Bill?" he asked, genially.

Streeter hesitated, then coughed, then fidgeted in his chair. "Don't you think I'm entitled to part of that reward, Charley?" he asked.

Instantly the room rang with Charley's laughter. "Why, in the name of justice, should I divide with you, Streeter?" he inquired.

Streeter considered. "Well, from time to time you have asked my advice, and I have given you the same free of charge, haven't I?"

"Yes."

"And you have talked my head off from time to time, haven't you, about that law school you're going to?"

Again Charley was compelled to answer in the affirmative.

"And you got me all interested in it, and in you, and in the chances of your success, and now that things have turned about so that you can follow out your ambition without any further waiting, I think that you might come thru with part of that reward; not much, but part."

Charley was puzzled. Had his old friend Bill turned grafter?

"How much, Bill?" he asked curiously.

Streeter scratched his head and fidgeted some more. "Might make it a good cigar, Charley," he suggested mildly. "You see, I want to smoke to your success, and tomorrow's pay day, and I haven't a cent with me."

CHAPTER XIV.

DANNY KRELL, on a certain mid-winter evening, quitted the penitentiary in which he had been confined, of his own volition. On a certain evening in mid-summer, he returned, also of his own volition. He had left the penal institution with a shaved head and wearing stripes, and some artistic quirk in Danny's makeup impelled him to re-

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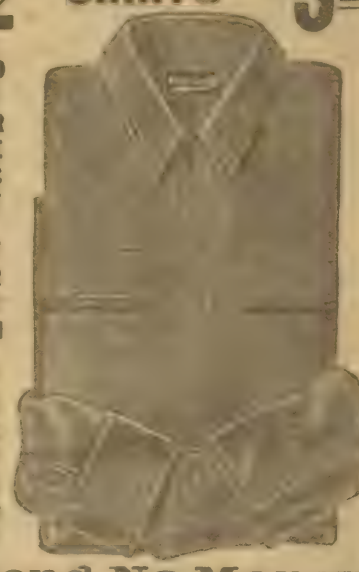

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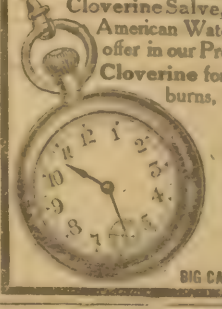

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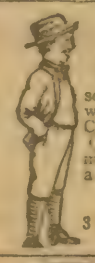

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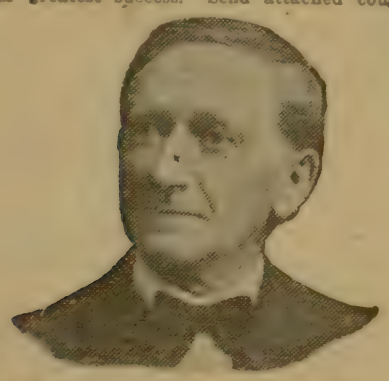

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enter it in the same fashion. Danny's going had stirred the warden intensely. His coming stirred him in much the same manner.

It was within an hour of midnight. Warden Starnes, seated in his comfortable library, suddenly raised his eyes from the book he was reading, gasped, blinked twice, then reached for his revolver.

He reconsidered the action, however, and sank back helpless, for the convict's gun was already trained upon him. "Don't do it, warden," the man cautioned in a low voice. "I have you covered."

The warden groaned in spirit. Another convict at large! Beforehand, he knew just what the newspapers and the public would say about it. Gross incompetency, they would call it. The board of managers would once more ask for his resignation, and this time the Governor would not raise his voice to save him. Twice had he been warned to discontinue the honor system he had inaugurated six months previous, and to return to the good old method of treating those intrusted to his care as so many wild beasts, and twice had he refused. And now——

"What do you want?" he managed to ask the silent figure in the doorway.

For answer the convict advanced—or rather limped painfully to the center of the room. "Know me, warden?" he asked, thrusting his features into the strong rays of electricity.

Most assuredly the warden did. Had this man returned perhaps to murder him! flashed thru his mind. Then, "What brings you here, Danny?" he managed to ask quietly.

"I'm sick of being hunted, warden," came the surprising answer. "I want to serve out the balance of my time."

"What!" For a moment the warden doubted his senses.

The convict smiled slightly. "Fact," he said, laying his revolver on the table within easy reach of the warden's hand, and sinking with a sigh of relief into a convenient chair. "You don't mind if I sit down, do you? My ankle; I sprained it the other night."

The warden nodded with understanding. "The black eye; did you receive that at the same time?" he inquired.

"Just a little before," asknowledged Danny, flushing. "Things all went wrong with me that night, warden," he muttered as if in extenuation. "Long George blew up; he had a streak of yellow wide as my——"

Again the warden nodded. "I've been reading the papers," he said. "I recognized you by the description."

"Sure," said Danny. "My description is tacked on every barn and telephone post in the country. That's one reason I came back."

"And you expect to serve out the remainder of your term without added punishment for escaping?"

"I thought perhaps you might arrange it that way, warden."

The warden stroked his beard reflectively. Such colossal nerve! "You were concerned in this Limited affair, I believe?" he suggested.

"Right in the middle of it," said Danny promptly. "It was the——"

"And you were concerned in various other enterprises of the same nature during your absence from here?"

Danny shook his head. "All newspaper talk, warden. I didn't murder the conductor; I didn't rob the bank. In fact, during the time I was out, I didn't do a single——"

"But, Danny, you have already admitted your complicity in this recent affair!"

"Oh, that!" Danny flushed slightly. "Honest, warden, the papers drove me to that. The way they hounded me around—charged me with murder and arson and robbing kids; they drove me into it."

HERE the warden took the wrong tack. "Had your heart been right——"

For the moment Danny forgot his surroundings. "Heart nothing," he scoffed, roughly. "What the dev—excuse me, warden, but it makes me sore even yet to think of it. There I was, cooped up in a room on Center street, growing a beard and coloring a meerschaum pipe; waiting for things to cool down a bit, and doing no harm to a living soul."

"You wronged me greatly when you broke your word to me, and you wronged me again when you enticed——"

"I didn't entice Long George away, warden—honest. You got me wrong there. I was planning my getaway when somehow or other this human beanpole got hep to what I was doing and nothing would do but that I must take him with me. I didn't want him, the big gander, but he threatened to blow if I didn't; so I took him along in self-protection."

"I am glad to hear that, Danny," said the warden with a sigh. "I had an idea that you took up with him for purposes of evil. George, you know, is an expert peter man."

Danny grinned. "Expert! Why, he is no expert. You should have seen what he did to that safe; blew it to h—. I mean he used enough juice on the thing to sink a battleship. But that's neither here nor there. I skipped of my own free will; dead sick of being shut in so long. As I said before, I hid away in a boarding-house waiting for things to settle a bit. Not only did I do nothing wrong during that period, but the idea of doing wrong did not occur to me. I had it figured to go West. My brother owns a ranch out there—he don't know I'm a crook—and grow up with the country. But the papers didn't give me a chance. And finally, when one day I opened one of the stinking sheets and found myself accused of murder, it made me mad. Right there I resolved to pull off a stunt that would give them something real to talk about."

"Which was very wrong," intimated the warden softly.

"I know it, warden; I knew I shouldn't do it; but as I said, I was mad clear thru, and went ahead anyway. And, tho I am ashamed of it now, I claim that I fixed up quite some job on the railroad company. By accident I discovereed concerning the diamond shipment, and that determined the date. And I decided to have Long George——"

"I know; I know. I followed the papers closely. What became of George?"

"Why, he went dingey; crazy as a loon; he's in——"

"I know. The other man—what was his name now? The one that disappeared?"

"Oh, him! He fell off the car!"

"Fell—good Lord!" ejaculated the warden excitedly. "Was he hurt?"

Danny shrugged his shoulders. "How do I know?" he answered, indifferently. "The car was hitting her up pretty lively at the time."

"The car was moving?"

"Like the—the very deuce," said Danny. "It happened this way. Soon as the charge exploded I jumped aboard—before the smoke cleared away. Then, a moment later, he hopped in thru the other door, and we mixed; went to it right. I slammed him one in the eye and he returned the compliment. Then I fell over a chair, and down I went, him on top. From that on the fight developed into a tussling match, first one up, then the other; we fought and clawed and scuffled all over that car floor. Then, first thing I knew, the little cuss broke my hold and staggered to his feet. And that was the end of the fight. We were nearer the door than he figured, I reckon. Anyway, he yanked loose, and staggered in the wrong direction, and out he went."

"And the car was moving, you say?"

"Like the very—pretty fast, warden."

THE warden looked his astonishment. "But why should it have been moving at the time?" he wanted to know.

"It shouldn't have been," said Danny, grimly, "only for that crazy George. He was a coward, that George; nothing fierce about him but his looks. He lost his head. When he lit the fuse those long legs of his must have carried him a mile before he quit running. At least he didn't get back until we two were having it hot and heavy. He didn't climb back into the car at all. I reckon he got an idea from what he saw that all the passengers he had helped rob were coming aboard, and took a notion that perhaps he had best run the car a few miles further up the track. And it must have gotten away from him."

"It must have," agreed the warden, interestedly. "And you, Danny?"

"Me? Oh, I jumped. The thing kept going faster and faster, and the car got to rocking so fearfully that I became afraid it was going to jump the rails. After the engine yanked it around a curve on two wheels, I grabbed the sack and jumped for it."

"You mean to say that you retained possession of the valuables taken from the passengers of the Olathe?"

"Surest thing on earth, warden. S'pose I was going to leave that sack there after all the risk it cost me? Sure, I grabbed the sack."

"But the papers, Danny," objected the warden. "The papers say that——"

Danny bristled. "What does the papers know about it?" he demanded, roughly. "The papers said I fell out of the car and was either killed or dangerously wounded! Bah! I wasn't even hurt—that is, nothing to speak of—ankle didn't begin hurting till next day. Maybe I wasted an hour or so laying there alongside the track getting my senses back—that was all, tho. Then I got to my feet and tramped it into Plattsburg."

"You did that?" questioned the warden in astonishment. "Weren't you afraid of being arrested?"

"Not then," said Danny simply. The police wouldn't be looking for me at that stage of the game. I stopped a bit to look around when I came to the overturned express car, but just then the Limited hove in sight and stopped to give the passengers a glimpse of the wreck, and I mosied."

"Just so, Danny," agreed the warden, dryly. "What happened finally to—to your little adversary. Did you by any means find out?"

"He got his, warden, this evening. I thought I'd die laughing."

"Arrested?"

"Yep, he got arrested; leastwise that's what they told me when they turned me loose."

"What?"

Danny nodded coolly. "Yes, warden," he said, "it was a case of too much advertising. I lit in Plattsburg about 10 o'clock, secured sleeping quarters over on Sixth street and went to bed. I had decided to turn the sack of junk over to the police the following morning."

"You had!"

"Yes; but when morning came, I changed my mind. I slept rather late that morning, and when I finally did get out, it was to find the town simply plastered with my name; newspapers were filled with it and the history of my exploits, while posters containing what

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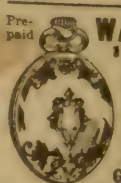

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purported to be my likeness were scattered about promiscuous. I decided that perhaps it wouldn't be for my best interests to appear at the police station."

The warden coughed slightly. "I should say not," he murmured.

"So I beat it from that town on the first train that pulled out of the station, and landed at Lafayette. It was from that burg I expressed the——."

"And they arrested you there?"

"Yes, but not right then. From the express office I went to a druggist and had him fix up something for my blooming foot—it was hurting like the very dickens; and then to the hotel. The druggist told me I had better keep off my feet a day or so, but it didn't get better; and this morning, when I ventured out in search of a shoe store—I wanted a bigger shoe for this foot—they nabbed me. And the boneheads wouldn't believe me when I told them the truth. They threw me into jail and telegraphed Plattsburg for the reward, the hay seeds. I was there all day; I'd been there yet if word hadn't come from headquarters to turn me loose; that the man wanted had already been captured."

Plainly the warden showed his bewilderment. "What!" he demanded, excitedly. "You mean to tell me that this Mister—what's his name—this brave little gentleman who engaged you in battle was the real thief after all?"

IT WAS Danny's turn to register bewilderment. Plainly, also, he showed his disgust. "Brave little gentleman, warden! I don't get you a-tall. He's brave all right, but good Lord, warden, you wouldn't call Happy Jack a gentleman, would you?"

"Was it really Happy?"

"It really was. He was the little snake."

"He—why—what in the world was Jack doing in the Pullman?"

Danny gave it up. "Oh, what's the use, warden!" he exclaimed wearily. "I thought you said you'd been following the papers. Long George and Jack went thru the Pullman."

Rapidly was the warden thumbing the pages of a two-day old newspaper. "Ah—Taylor—that's the name. "The real hero of the occasion was a Mr. Taylor," he read. "Now, Danny, who——"

"Me," said Danny, ungrammatically. "That was myself. I thought you said you recognized me by the description." "Why—why, I thought you were the little bandit; I had no thought of there being another little rascal."

"I don't blame you, warden," Danny cut in, cheerfully. "That's the impression that every one else seems to have been laboring under. Nevertheless, I was Mr. Taylor, the 'hero.'"

Overcome by the revelation, for a long moment the warden remained silent. Then he said:

"Excuse me, Danny," he began, uncertainly. "I—really, I find myself lacking in words to express my appreciation of your voluntary return to imprisonment, and I don't wish for a moment to have you believe that I have joined the ranks of the unbelievers, but isn't the role of hero rather out of your line?"

Danny blushed. "I'm no hero, warden," he exclaimed, emphatically. "I boarded the Limited with the fixed and avowed intention of holding it up. I had it all planned; place, time, and everything. The only thing that went wrong with my calculation was Long George. I couldn't find him. People at his hang-out said that he had departed for parts unknown. It didn't matter, tho; I restaged the action so that I could do it by my lonely. But I had no more than boarded the train when something happened to me; that is"—Danny laughed shortly—"I changed my mind. I even decided to cut out train-robbing altogether. And while I was still thinking it over, and wondering if—well, anyway, just about that time, blest if Long George and that Jack who escaped before I did—blest if they didn't board the Pullman, nearly brain the porter, and stage the darndest—but you read about it."

"How came you to spoil their game?" asked the warden, curiously.

"I'm coming to that," said Danny. "They weren't decent about it, for one thing. They acted too hoggish to suit my taste. Grabbed everything in sight, just because they could; wedding rings and ear rings, and little keepsakes and nicknacks, such as a fence wouldn't give 15 cents a pound for. Before they left the car they had all the women blubbering. And the young lady I was talking to; they strapped her proper; took all she had with her but her clothes; and then the little wart grabbed my watch and said he'd come back and bust me in the eye when he had more time; and I went after him and gave him the chance," muttered Danny. "I sure did. I came up with the express car, warden, just before the explosion, and if I didn't spoil their game—of course, they ruined my plans also; I had figured upon lugging the stuff back to the car and making everybody happy for once in my misguided life, but I got them worse, even at that, than they did me. All that work for nothing; the safe was fairly bulging with coin and valuables of every description, and they didn't get a picayune."

"The papers say they got away with the diamonds," stated the warden mildly.

"Humph!" snorted Danny. "Wrong, as usual!" Then, as the warden stared his unbelief, he drew forth from an inner pocket two long, thin packages, identical in size and wrapping, the waxed seals of which were unbroken.

"Here they are," said Danny. "Thirty thousand dollars' worth of shiners. I pulled them from the safe just before I left the car."

"But why are you here?"

"Alibi, warden; that's why. Already had I made up my mind to return and serve out the remainder of my time, and I brought these along simply to help convince you that I have really reformed."

"I comprehend," said the warden. "And you have accomplished your purpose, but—but——" Still the warden seemed dissatisfied.

Danny laughed, this time heartily. "Do you believe in love at first sight, warden?" he queried.

"I married my wife within twenty-four hours of the minute I first saw her," the warden admitted, promptly. "Why?"

"If you are hunting for the hidden motive, that's it," confessed Danny, his fingers busy with the catch of his watch charm. "This is the picture of the lady, warden. I swiped it from her locket before I sent it back."

* * * * * * *

Danny did not sleep in the cell-house that night. He occupied a bed in the warden's own apartment. The warden was bidding his guest good-night. "There's no doubt I can get you a pardon within three days, Danny," he remarked, meditatively. His fingers held a yellow telegram. "Particularly since this telegram arrived, containing the information about the confession of Happy Jack that he was the author of the train robbery for which you were convicted six years ago."

Danny smiled. "Much obliged, warden," he said, "I'll sure need it. You see, it's this way: The lady invited me out to see her some day; that is, she said that I might drop in and see her in case I ever hit that part of the country. And that's where I'm going, warden, the minute I leave here." And Danny held up his right hand to emphasize the point. "Especially since now I am really and truly free," he added.

* * * * * * *

About to extinguish the light, Danny paused, then stepped to the door and admitted the warden. The warden was apologetic. "I just couldn't help it, Danny," he said. "There remains still one point in your recital obscure to me; for the life of me I cannot figure it without your help."

"Anything to assist, warden," Danny assured him gaily.

"Very well, Danny, now listen: If I remember rightly, you were near the overturned express car when the Limited came up and paused for a few moments?"

"Right," said Danny. "It stopped for about five minutes."

"Ah! Just what I am trying to get at!" "Why did you not board the train at that time and carry thru your original program?"

Slowly a flush mounted Danny's mobile features. "Oh, shucks!" he ejaculated, boyishly. Then: "I didn't care about having the lady see this bum optic of mine, warden," he confessed honestly.

The End.

Revised Version.

ADMITTEDLY this may be an old story, but it has the distinction of possessing a new twist at the end.

A person died. He willed all his earthly possessions to be divided among an Englishman, an Irishman and a Scotchman. But the will was conditional; each of the legatees was to place five pounds in the testator's coffin. On the day appointed (by Fate) the Englishman placed a five-pound note, as willed; the Irishman collected a number of coins somehow—shillings, sixpences and coppers—and made up his contributions of five pounds, which he placed on the Englishman's fiver. The Scotchman then made out a check for fifteen pounds and, pocketing the ten pounds already deposited, threw in his check with the remark, "That's easier."

A month later, when the Scotchman perused his passbook, he was surprised to find that his check had been cashed.

The undertaker was a Welshman.

At the Second-hand Shop.

THE naval class was under signal instructions. Most of them had just come back from leave, and, as a result to some of the boys in blue the instructor's voice seemed very far away indeed. "A ship in distress," he was saying, thru the room spaces, "has several methods by means of which she can make known her condition to other vessels or shore stations. Name one, Binks."

"The international code signal N. C.," replied Binks, waking up just in time.

"Right," said the instructor.

"Jenks, name another."

Jenks started out of a dream. "Eh!" he ejaculated.

"What would you do if you were in distress?" repeated the signal instructor.

"Why," mumbled Jenks, "pawn me watch."

A Miracle.

LAWYER—Judge, I plead for the dismissal of the defendant. He's deaf.

Judge—Not granted. He'll have his hearing in the morning.

Chained To His Work, Many A Man Lets Health Slip Away

Says Physician, Telling How Gruelling Strain of Business Life Saps the Iron From the Blood of Thousands, Breaking Down Their Health, Strength, and Vitality—Explains How Organic Iron—Nuxated Iron, Helps Make Men Strong, Sturdy and Successful.

Commenting upon the appalling number of men who are every day breaking down under the nervous and physical strain of business life, Dr. John J. Van Horne, formerly Medical Inspector and Clinical Physician on the Board of Health of New York City, says:

"Over and over again I see in my practice men in the prime of life who are rapidly breaking down under the gruelling strain of business cares. Like shackled slaves they are chained to their work while their health is slowly but surely slipping away, and each man seems to think that he is strong enough to get by somehow though the other fellow may break down. But not until the overworked body and tired brain rebel and he suffers a nervous or physical collapse does he realize that he has squandered his health and strength, often by simply neglecting the condition of his blood. Due to lack of iron it has become thin, pale and watery, too impoverished to keep him strong and well, vigorous in mind and body. Yet if he would only learn the importance of iron and keep his blood pure and rich by means of organic iron—Nuxated Iron—he might gain the health and energy to meet all business strains and stresses and gain success in every undertaking by sheer force of splendid vitality.

"Iron is the red blood food, iron is Nature's means for carrying the life-giving oxygen we breathe to the body and brain cells. Without iron the blood could not change the food we eat into living tissue, and could not carry off the poisonous waste matter. Overwork, worry and the unceasing strain and struggle of present-day high-tension business life, sap the energizing iron from the red blood corpuscles, leaving the blood in an anaemic condition, only capable of half nourishing the brain and body. With only 50 per cent energy, a man can be only 50 per cent efficient and I believe there are thousands who can attribute their failure to get ahead in life to nothing more or less than lack of iron in the blood. I advise all men who are working long hours and drawing heavily upon their nervous vitality and physical endurance, to keep their blood rich in iron, and for this purpose I always prescribe a short course of organic iron—Nuxated Iron. By creating thousands of new red blood corpuscles, building up strength and energy and enabling the organs to function normally, Nuxated Iron can help a man to bear up under business strain and gain that tireless vigor and masterful vitality that bring success.

"I know of nothing better than Nuxated Iron to tone up the system, build up the blood, and bring the glow of health to tired, worn-out bodies. I have seen a remarkable improvement in many cases in only two weeks' time."

No matter what other tonics or iron remedies you have used without success—if you are not strong or well, you owe it to yourself to make the following test. See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of Nuxated Iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength and see how much you have gained. Nuxated Iron will increase the strength, power and endurance of over-worked, nervous, run-down people in two weeks' time in many instances.

ARE YOU A SHACKLED SLAVE TO BUSINESS Being Robbed of Your Health, Strength and Endurance?

A Physician Tells How You Can Build Up Red Blood, Strength, and Energy by Means of Organic Iron—Nuxated Iron.

Manufacturers' Note: Nuxated Iron, which is recommended above is not a secret remedy but one which is well known to druggists everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products it is easily assimilated and does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach. Each tablet of genuine Nuxated Iron is stamped as follows N and the words Nuxated Iron are stamped into each bottle, so that the public may not be led into accepting inferior substitutes. The manufacturers guarantee successful and entirely satisfactory results to every purchaser or they will refund your money. It is dispensed by all good druggists in tablet form only.

NUXATED IRON

For Red Blood, Strength and Endurance

For Ledger Girls and Boys

Company for Lunch

THE house where Bob and Jack spend the summer was on the edge of a beautiful big woods and a wide meadow. The boys thought that a most convenient place for a summer home for, you see, when they wanted to play under trees or climb trees, there the trees were, right by the front door of their home. And when they wanted to fly kites or run races or anything like that, there was the flat, beautiful meadow, right at the back door.

But there was one thing they could do on the meadow that they never even thought of doing when they moved into the house. They could watch the airplanes sail by. Now when the boys and their parents moved into this particular house, they didn't know that one of the U. S. aviation fields was only about ten miles away. So when they began to notice airplanes go by, two and three and sometimes ten a day, they began to wonder and to inquire. And then they found that those planes they saw were mail planes and practice planes and all sorts of planes from the field not so far away.

Bob and Jack used to sit on the fence at the edge of the meadow and watch that the planes would fly close enough and low enough for them to signal the men aboard—but the planes never did. Always they went by so far overhead that they looked like beautiful big birds—only the noise they made was a lot more than the noise any bird makes in flying, that was sure!

"You boys stay out in that meadow so much," laughed their mother one day, "that I think I'll give you your lunch and let you stay out there all the time!" Of course, she meant it as a joke, but her words gave Bob an idea.

He thought and thought and finally decided he wouldn't tell anybody, not even Jack, till he had thought about his idea long enough to know just whether it would work.

Instead of telling, he began to make an airship of his own from a pattern he got in a book. He whittled the wooden parts, and glued the paper parts and made everything just in shipshape according to directions. And, of course, that was very interesting work. Even the boys' father thought it was, and he helped all Bob would let him—which wasn't so very much, for Bob believed in doing everything himself if he could.

One fine day the airship was finished and the family and the two or three boy friends near by, all went out to the edge of the meadow to see if it would really fly as Bob promised it would. The day was perfect—wind enough to take it up, but not enough to make bad currents of air or tugging at the string. A little help from his friends, a couple of bad starts and away the airship flew! Higher and higher as fast as Bob could let out the string she went, till the little ship seemed like a bird just as the big ones had. Bob was very proud.

While the toy airship was high in the air, one of the really-truly airships went sailing by, fast, oh, so very fast, and lower than any airplane that Bob had ever seen pass their meadow. Bob looked and looked, and sure enough, he could actually see the man driving the plane, actually see him looking over the edge! "Could the man see his own airship?" Bob wondered.

And from that minute, the big idea grew and grew till it just had to come true, Bob thought. So the very next morning he set to work.

He gathered a lot of old newspapers and went out into the meadow. First he went alone, but Jack followed and Bob let him stay, tho he didn't explain a bit what he was doing, and Jack, for the life of him, couldn't make head nor tail of the funny business.

The day was hot and not a breath of air stirring. "Just perfect!" Bob declared happily, tho Jack confessed that he liked a breeze better.

Keeping his eye on the sky all the while, Bob began to spread out the newspapers he had brought. One long line, then a funny curved line—such a crazy way to act Jack thought when he had that lovely new airship he might be flying.

"What you going to make now?" asked Jack finally, when he grew more and more puzzled," did mother say you had to spread 'em all out to dry? They don't look wet."

"They aren't, silly," laughed Bob, excitedly, "'tho wetting them would be a good idea for a windy day. This isn't work and it isn't play, it's an invitation."

That puzzled little Jack more than ever and he decided he could find a pleasanter game for a hot day so he went up to the sand pile and left his industrious brother all alone with his papers.

"That's all right," said Bob to himself approvingly as he looked at the spread out papers. Now I'll start the next. And if I don't get it all done today maybe he'll remember today when I finish the rest tomorrow."

And then he worked away harder than ever at the funny job of spreading papers in long, queer-looking lines on that smooth meadow.

He was still hard at it when the whirr of a motor told him that an airplane was coming. He stopped his work and strained his eyes to see the pilot, but tho he looked hard and tho the plane flew rather low, not a sign of anybody did he see.

"Never mind," he said comfortably, "it may take several days, but I can do it I know."

So the next morning he worked at his papers till the plane went by, and the next and the next, and still nothing happened and still he wouldn't explain to anybody what he was trying to do.

The morning of the fourth day he finished his paper work early and was getting ready to fly the airship kite for Jack when the airplane motor sounded in the distance.

Not so far away this time it was, and getting louder and nearer every minute.

"Kinda scares me, it does, when it comes so near," said little Jack, and he stood close to his bigger brother.

"It's a coming!" exclaimed Bob, excitedly. "Look! Jack! Look! It's coming down!"

And sure enough! The great bird-like plane that for days had passed over the meadow, was circling lower and lower right over their own meadow! The boys could hardly believe their eyes.

Lower. Lower. Still lower. They could see the lettering; they could see the patches on the wings; the man in the pit and every little part of the machine. And still it came lower, down—till it came to a stop on the ground in the middle of their very own meadow.

The driver got out of the plane and called to the boys.

"Your father home?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Bob and he was so excited he could hardly say the word. "Ask him if he'll help me a bit," added the driver, "I need some help and I don't believe I'll have to go clear back to the school."

The boys' father heard the talking and he and mother came hurrying out of the house to see if they were needed. The slight repair was easily made and the driver got ready to start again.

"You're not going off right at lunch time without a bite, are you?" asked Bob's mother hospitably. "You know how these two boys would like you to stay."

"Well, I don't care if I do," said the driver, "I'd been thinking I got to accept your invitation and to tell the truth, madam, that's partly why I stopped right here in this good meadow."

"My invitation?" asked Mrs. Reynolds much puzzled, "before now do you mean?"

Bob flushed and said, "My invitation, he means, mother. Each day I've been asking him to come."

"But I don't understand," said his mother.

"Well, he's a smart chap if he's done it alone," said the aviator. "Every day he has had letters spread out on the grass of the meadow. The first day or two I didn't think much of it, but as it went on I was sure he meant it for me. The letters spelled, 'Please stop here for lunch.' And so I did."

And that's how it happened that Bob had such fine company for lunch.

Hard to Get.

"WHEN I was coming home last night," said Miss Skerry, "I saw a man skulking along in the shadow. Oh, how I ran!"

"And couldn't you catch him?" inquired her little brother, innocently.

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W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500-514 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO.

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BIGGEST MONEY-MAKER IN AMERICA. I want 100 men and women quick to take orders for raincoats, raincapes and waterproof aprons. Thousands of orders waiting for you. $2.00 an hour for spare time. McDonough made $813.00 in one month. Nissen $19.00 in three hours. Purviance $207.00 in seven days. $5,000 a year profit for eight average orders a day. No delivering or collecting. Beautiful coat free. No experience or capital required. Write quick for information. Comer Manufacturing Co., Dept. B-161, Dayton, Ohio.

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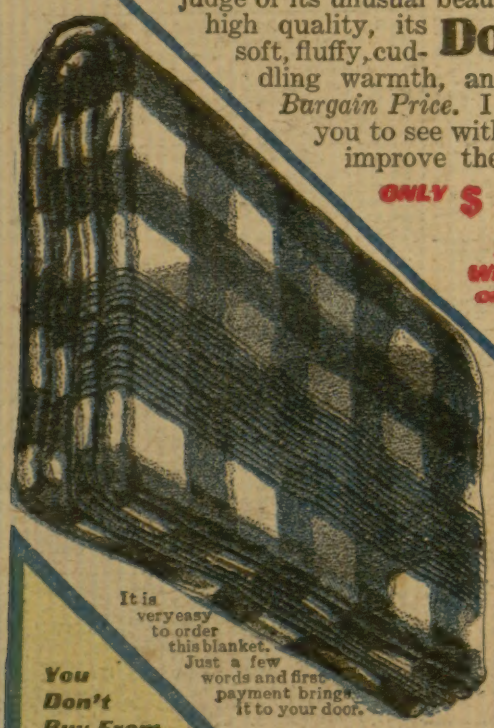

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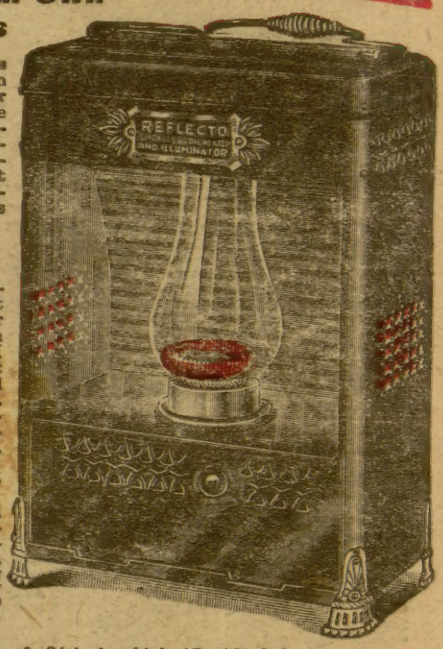

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